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Performing the Sacred:

The Concept of Journey in *Codex Delilah*

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Performing the Sacred:

The Concept of Journey in *Codex Delilah*

by

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Dissertation

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This dissertation is lovingly dedicated to the memory of

Cleofas Mena, *Partera y Curandera*

of

Crystal City, Texas

1886 – 1970

and to her grandson

Jesús Manuel Mena Garza

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Performing the Sacred:

The Concept of Journey in *Codex Delilah*

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The concept of journey as a means of transformation appears throughout the visual representations of all periods and cultures. This dissertation examines how Chicana artist Delilah Montoya and poet and playwright Cecilio García-Camarillo use the concept of journey in *Codex Delilah, Six Deer: Journey from Mexicatl to Chicana*, to create a recuperation of the roles women have played in the history of the Americas. The study establishes the similarities between subject matter, worldview, and formal structures of ancient Mesoamerican codices and Montoya's contemporary artwork. Tracing how contemporary Chicana/o artists have adopted the ancient codex form, the dissertation asserts the importance of the phenomenon of Chicana/o codices and argues for a recognition of their place as a separate genre parallel but uniquely different from contemporary artists books. The work uses the trope of *curanderismo* (Mexican folk medicine) to show how the bodies Montoya depicts contain the sacred,

demonstrate the continuity of ancient healing practices, and create a genealogy of female healers. The study calls for more research on *Codex Delilah,* the phenomenon of Chicana/o codices, and encourages art historians to apply a more kinesthetic or body conscious approach to their work.

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Introduction

The "journey" of this dissertation began in the *tienda*[1] (store) of San Francisco's Mexican Museum along the windswept, ocean waterfront of Fort Mason. The exact year escapes me, it was probably 1994, a year I spent pursuing a fine art and art history education in addition to a demanding professional job. In the museum's store, I purchased several catalogs from previous exhibitions including a show from 1992 entitled, "The Chicano Codices: En*counter*ing Art of the Americas."[2] Although I glanced at the catalog a number of times, I never studied it in-depth, secure in the knowledge that it lay on my bookshelf should I ever need it. Five years later, I left the Bay Area to enter graduate school at the University of Texas at Austin. As part of my admission application, I drafted a statement of purpose that declared my intention "to investigate and illuminate the indigenous roots of contemporary Latin American and Chicana/o[3] art, exploring how both Pre-Columbian and Spanish Colonial images

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[1] When this dissertation includes words in languages other than English, I adopt the convention of italicizing these words at first use. After the initial reference, I no longer italicize them.

[2] Patricia Draher, ed., *The Chicano Codices: Encountering Art of the Americas* (San Francisco: The Mexican Museum, 1992). In much of the published material associated with the exhibit, the seven-letter section "counter" of the word "encounter" was italicized to emphasize the exhibition's aim to counter or work against Quincentenary celebrations that applauded European arrival while negating the importance of indigenous peoples and their ways of life. Due to the convention of using italics to indicate book titles, many readers miss this critical concept articulated by the exhibition's curator, Marcos Sanchez-Tranquilino.

[3] "Chicana/o" is a currently accepted term used to simultaneously describe male and female Americans of Mexican descent. The term Chicana describes a female of Mexican descent born in the United States

influence and characterize these artworks." I spent the first two years of my graduate program engrossed in the study of Latin American, Mesoamerican, and contemporary Chicano art, while wrestling with theory and the disciplinary norms of art history. I consulted the catalog occasionally, especially when researching the production of Chicana/o artists for seminar papers.

Throughout my Master's program, the book remained in the rapidly expanding Chicana/o art section of my bookshelf. Then, in March of 2001, I received an urgent message from a colleague. My friend had organized a panel for the one-hundredth annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association on the appropriation of style in the art of the Americas. Just days before the deadline for proposals, a confirmed member of the panel had dropped out. Although I had nearly finished two years of graduate school and was busy writing my Master's thesis, I still had not yet presented original research at a conference. I immediately knew that I would discuss the ancient American codex form and the Chicana/o "appropriation" or use of Mesoamerican symbols and worldview in contemporary codices by Chicana/o artists. I grabbed the, admittedly dusty, *Chicano Codices* catalog from the shelf and began

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and the corresponding word Chicano describes a male of Mexican descent born in the United States. While various theories account for the use and development of these words, the terms reflect a critical stance toward the social, political, and economic conditions faced by Americans of Mexican descent and demonstrate a distinct pride in their cultural heritage.

narrowing my topic. Kathy Vargas was the subject of my Master's Thesis,[4] and since I was committed to "writing Chicanas into history,"[5] specifically the canons of art history, I chose Vargas's *Codex Not-Vargas: The Forgotten Name Codex* and a work by Delilah Montoya, *Codex Delilah, Six-Deer: Journey from Mexicatl to Chicana*, as the basis for the conference paper.

I began work on the project and, since I was somewhat nervous about this opportunity, I spoke with my thesis co-chair and Latin American art mentor, Jacqueline Barnitz. After sharing my news and describing my initial research on *Codex Delilah*, she said, "You know, Ann, this would make a wonderful dissertation topic." More concerned about my upcoming debut at a national conference than my eventual dissertation subject, I filed her comment at the back of my consciousness. Until this point, I had only seen the exhibition catalog's reproduction of *Codex Delilah*, a photograph that measured three and one half by seven inches. Obviously, this scale made detailed analysis impossible. To prepare for the presentation, I traveled to the Center for Southwest Research at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque and viewed the work for the first time. I was completely unprepared for

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[4] Ann Marie Leimer, "Revisioning the American Landscape: The Construction of Space and Place in Contemporary Chicana Photographer Kathy Vargas's *My Alamo* Series" (Master's Thesis, University of Texas, 2001).

[5] I take this phrase from Chicana scholar Emma Pérez's important work that examines how histories of Chicana/os have been constructed. See Emma Pérez, *The Decolonial Imaginary: Writing Chicanas Into History* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: University of Indiana Press, 1999).

the beauty, complexity, and size of the work, each panel alone measuring close to thirty inches high by fifteen inches wide. This initial viewing decided my fate – *Codex Delilah* would be my dissertation subject.

The Quincentenary and "The Chicano Codices" Exhibition

In 1992, a critical moment occurred in the history of the Americas when the world marked the five hundredth anniversary of European contact with global celebrations that drew attention to the initial juncture of "Old" and "New" Worlds. Art exhibitions produced to recognize this anniversary either lauded European presence in the New World or critically addressed the aftermath of these encounters. In the United States, artists and activists of mixed race and indigenous heritage and their allies criticized the anniversary's observance by raising the issue of histories silenced by the conquest and the further elision of these cultures during the yearlong commemoration. Responding to this unique historical moment, The Mexican Museum in San Francisco commissioned contemporary Chicana/o artists to produce works that addressed the consequences of five hundred years of European occupation of the Americas. Intended as a critical response to the national observation of the quincentenary of Columbus's so-called discovery of the "New World," the exhibition, "The Chicano Codices: En*counter*ing Art of the Americas," reflected the rupture of indigenous lives and cultures in the Americas while simultaneously demonstrating their continuity. Using the Mesoamerican codex or book form as the overarching trope to shape the exhibit,

curator Marcos Sanchez-Tranquilino[6] asked the artists to produce contemporary codices that addressed the consequences of European occupation of the Americas. In the production of these artworks, many of the artists "properly"[7] appropriated iconographic and artistic forms from the pre-contact and Colonial periods including Mesoamerican book traditions.

Codex Delilah, Six-Deer: Journey from Mexicatl to Chicana

This dissertation investigates one of the works created for this exhibit, a contemporary adaptation of the Mesoamerican codex form entitled, *Codex Delilah, Six-Deer: Journey from Mexicatl to Chicana*. Produced by printmaker and photographer Delilah Montoya in conjunction with the late poet and playwright Cecilio García-Camarillo,[8] *Codex Delilah* is a seven page screenfold artist's book that

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[6] Throughout the dissertation, I respectfully adopt the practice of using the proper accents on non-English words and names where appropriate. In previously published works, Sanchez-Tranquilino has requested no accent be used when spelling his name and I follow this directive.

[7] In a conversation on February 27, 2002, Amelia Malagamba suggested the Chicana/o use of Mesoamerican forms and iconography as an appropriate or "proper" use of this material.

[8] Cecilio García-Camarillo, poet, playwright, publisher, editor, and tireless advocate of *flor y canto* (flower and song), died from cancer at the age of 58 on January 16, 2002, in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Born in Laredo, Texas, he received a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature from the University of Texas of Austin in 1967, and later moved to Albuquerque in 1977 where he made his home. Nicknamed "The Chicano Renaissance Man," García-Camarillo mentored young Chicana/o writers and was a key figure in the literary arm of *El Movimiento Chicano* (the movement for social justice for Chicanas/os that begin in the 1960s). He founded and edited the literary magazine *Caracol* along with *El Magazín* and *Rayas* and produced numerous chapbooks of his poetry. Also known as "Xilo," García-Camarillo founded Albuquerque's weekly radio program "Espejos de Aztlán" on KUNM 89.9 FM and served as dramaturg for *La Compañía de Teatro de Albuquerque*. Delilah Montoya and García-Camarillo enjoyed a decades-long friendship and collaborative artistic partnership as evidence by *Codex Delilah* and other projects such as *Crickets In My Mind* (1992). In *I Am Joaquín,* an important early work from El Movimiento, Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzáles (June 18,

illustrates, through images and texts, a journey in pursuit of knowledge conducted by a fictional indigenous girl named Six-Deer. Montoya wanted to consider the initial meeting between Mesoamerica and Europe, the consequences of the encounter, and its enduring legacy within contemporary Chicana/o life. In the work, she re-imagined and reconstructed this history from the point of view of a feminist woman who self-identifies as a Chicana and *mestiza*.[9] Additionally, she intended to create a heroine in Six-Deer and, ultimately, hoped that her work would encourage serious scholarly recuperation of Chicanas and their contributions to history.

The goal of the dissertation is to build on Montoya's intention of a reconstruction and reclamation of the historical roles of women and, using Montoya's ideas as a foundation, to explore additional meanings present in the work. This study considers the performance and production of the sacred in *Codex Delilah* through a consideration of its form, composition, symbols, narrative, the physical journey Six-Deer conducts, and the female characters she encounters. The word performance means the conducting or carrying out of specific actions or behaviors by bodies or

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1928–April 12, 2005) declared, "There are no revolutions without poets." Certainly, Xilo was one of the important poetic voices who furthered the Chicana/o movement's quest for justice, access to resources, and increased representation. For more information on Cecilio García-Camarillo and his work, see Cecilio García-Camarillo and Enrique LaMadrid, *Selected Poetry of Cecilio García-Camarillo* (Houston: Arte-Publico, 2000), Cecilio García-Camarillo, Roberto Rodríguez, and Patrisia Gonzáles, eds., *Cantos al Sexto Sol: An Anthology of Aztlanahuac Writings* (San Antonio: Wings Press, 2002), Carmen Tafolla, "Semillas, A Tribute to Cecilio García-Camarillo," *El Aviso* 4:1 (Spring 2002).

[9] The word mestiza refers to a female of indigenous and Spanish ethnicity and mestizo is the corresponding term to describe a male.

objects presented in the codex. The term production refers to the conscious, selective arrangement by the artist of symbols, images, figures (characters), and the actions performed by these elements in the artwork. In *Codex Delilah*, Montoya continues many of the conventions of Mesoamerican books and properly appropriates their form, composition, and images while creating a thoroughly contemporary artwork. The term appropriation can be problematic because it generally implies the taking of something against one's will by coercion. I use another sense of the term in this dissertation and define appropriation as the use or adaptation of something and the process of making that idea or image one's own. Rather than understanding appropriation as the taking of something without permission, I invite the reader to consider Montoya's adaptation of the codex form as a reemergence of something that already belongs to her and other Chicana/o artists and as a continuation of an ancient artistic, cultural, and spiritual heritage.[10] To discuss how Montoya presents the sacred, I identify the images, symbols, materials, methods, and forms Montoya appropriated and then articulate how and why she appropriated them. I determine if the artist appropriated a particular picture, form, or method by establishing their historical and cultural context and by demonstrating the source of the borrowed artistic and cultural tradition.

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[10] Ann Marie Leimer, "Loss, Reclamation, and Empowerment: The Pre-Columbian Codex Form as Interpreted by Contemporary Chicana Artists Delilah Montoya and Kathy Vargas," (Unpublished paper presented at the American Anthropological Association, November 29, 2001, Washington, DC), 2.

In addition to appropriating forms and symbols to produce the sacred in the narrative, Montoya uses the concept of journey as an organizing device to structure Six-Deer's realization of personal and spiritual power and her ultimate redemption of the world. Therefore, I interrogate the relationship between the form of the codex and its experience as a narrative. I examine the book as a device to convey the story, provide an understanding of how the narrative functions to structure the object, and show how the form and its experience supports both Montoya's intended meaning and further interpretations of the narrative. Using the codex form, Montoya tells the story of a literal physical journey undertaken by her central character, Six-Deer. She presents the narrative through its form, iconography, techniques, materials, images, and texts. To reconstruct history from a mestiza point of view, she 1) locates each panel of the codex in a specific geographic location, 2) identifies the time of each panel in the codex with Maya glyphs, and 3) places time-based characters or figures from crucial historical moments on each panel of the work.

While I acknowledge the artist's stated purpose of Six-Deer's physical journey to recreate and reconstruct history, I argue that the journey presented in *Codex Delilah* has multiple meanings. Throughout the work, Montoya uses sacred sites, women as healers, and various healing practices as a means to support Six-Deer's progressive enlightenment. The study suggests that the sacred and the spiritual manifest in both the structure of the journey and in the bodies (human and otherwise) that Six-Deer meets

during the enactment of the journey. Montoya's previous artwork exploring these topics and the profound presence of spiritual elements in the work support this viewpoint. To demonstrate the codex's additional meaning(s), I consider the component of spirituality and the sacred through an examination of *Codex Delilah* in the cultural context of 1) rites of passage, initiation ritual, and pilgrimage; 2) the body as container of the sacred; and 3) the codex as performative location and object of performance.

Through a discussion of the narrative, iconography, symbols, forms of the codex, the notion of journey, and the bodies found in the artwork, the dissertation engages the following central questions: How does Montoya shape and present the notions of the sacred within the codex? How does the artist imbricate mestiza (mixed race) consciousness with *curanderismo* (Mexican folk medicine) and other healing practices in her construction of the sacred? What does the performance of the journey produce?

Chapter 1, "Codices of the Americas: Continuity and Transformation," considers the larger ancient American artistic inheritance[11] that informs *Codex Delilah* and examines the book form within the context of Mesoamerican artistic traditions. First, it discusses the forms, content, use, and purpose of Mesoamerica codices

[11] I refer here to Mesoamerican art traditions.

produced both before and after First Contact and demonstrates their concern with the sacred, the cosmos, and spirituality. Second, the chapter traces the historical trajectory of contemporary codices produced by Chicana/o artists that pre and post-date the 1992 "Chicano Codices" exhibition. Third, I selectively examine some of the codices commissioned for the 1992 show, analyze these codices in terms of form and subject matter, consider how they represent the sacred, and how their representations of the sacred compare to Montoya's treatment in *Codex Delilah.* Finally, this chapter articulates the related genre of artists books and discusses the place of *Codex Delilah* and other contemporary Chicana/o codices within this larger American artistic tradition.

Chapter 2, "*Codex Delilah, Six Deer: Journey from Mexicatl to Chicana*: Formal Analysis and Context within Chicana/o Art," first provides a detailed formal analysis of *Codex Delilah* and introduces the object within the context of its creation. Because *Codex Delilah* is a complex and multi-layered work, I systematically describe the work through an examination of each panel of the codex. I identify appropriated images, materials, and techniques, and place the female characters within their social, cultural, historical, and spiritual milieu. Second, the study situates the codex within Montoya's art production to date. Thirdly, the final section locates *Codex Delilah* within the Chicana/o artistic tradition as a whole.

The last three sections of the dissertation demonstrate the additional meanings

in *Codex Delilah*, articulate Montoya's contribution to what Amalia Mesa-Bains has termed "a contemporary visual language of the spiritual,"[12] and define *Codex Delilah's* larger contribution to American art. Chapter 3, "To Find Our Lives: *Codex Delilah* as Hero(ine)'s *Jornada*/Journey," explores how Montoya uses the concept of journey to produce the sacred in this artwork. This chapter positions the journey as rite of passage, initiatory ritual, and sacred pilgrimage and positions the imagery found in the codex within these paradigms. I compare these forms, their structures, goals, and symbolic elements to those in *Codex Delilah* and explain how *Codex Delilah* exemplifies and embodies these ritual structures.

Chapter 4, "*Codex Delilah* as Embodiment of the Sacred," examines how Montoya reveals the sacred through the presentation of the bodies (characters) contained in the codex. First, this chapter traces the various bodies present in the codex and, although I recognize a range of bodies, I primarily limit my analysis to the human bodies (characters) in the work. While images of the sacred in the codex reflect the syncretization of indigenous and Christian sources, Montoya also represents a variety of healing and spiritual practices drawn from ancient indigenous and Mexican folk traditions. Curanderismo, or Mexican folk medicine, rejects the division of mind and body and understands human beings as inherently and intimately involved in the

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[12] Amalia Mesa-Bains, "Spiritual Visions in Contemporary Art," in *Imáges e Historias/Images and Histories*, ed. Constance Cortéz (Medford: Tufts University Gallery, 1999), 8.

process of personal and communal harmony. Therefore, in the second section of this chapter, I adopt curanderismo as a model for positing the bodies within *Codex Delilah* as reflective of and integrally connected to community. Within this framework, I analyze and interpret to how Montoya constructs the sacred by discussing how the bodies of the codex's female characters demonstrate the concepts of healing, sacrifice, and redemption. Chicana/o artists often portray the notion of sacred repository by using the forms of *caja* (box) or *nicho* (niche) to contain spiritual power. Following this idea, I position the bodies of the female characters in the codex as archives of spiritual knowledge and suggest the body as repository of history, wisdom, and spiritual knowledge(s).

Finally, Chapter 5, "*Codex Delilah* as Site and Object of Performance," considers the codex as object and place of performance. By "place of performance," this dissertation means that the codex forms the physical object or structure that houses a particular narrative being performed. First, the study suggests that the codex form, its individual pages, and its format as a whole, create a place for the staging of bodies understood as a performance space. Second, this chapter links ideas developed by dance historians, educators, dance ethnographers, and performance theorists to provide a framework to discuss what *Codex Delilah* and the bodies it contains perform. Third, the chapter advocates for the increased use and development of theories that engage bodily awareness as a means of critical art historical analysis and

calls for greater attention and deeper discussion of the art historian's bodily experience of artworks.

Methods and Analytical Framework

To address these questions, the study takes an interdisciplinary approach and braids together art historical methods and traditions along with those from other disciplines. Formal, iconographic, and narrative analysis form the central lenses taken from the field of art history. The theoretical notions that shape the positions taken in this dissertation beyond the field of art history arise from feminism developed by women of color, anthropology, the history of religions, and performance studies. Since Montoya created the work from a mixed race and feminist point of view, a consideration of work developed by feminist women of color is critical to this study. I use concepts from the field of anthropology to consider *Codex Delilah* because the position(s) taken by the artist mandates this perspective. Anthropological discourse allows me to consider *Codex Delilah* from the viewpoint of a material object that also draws heavily upon the artist's personal experience. Work arising from the history of religions supports the analysis of the sacred, cosmological worldview, and ritual practices articulated in the dissertation, while material from performance studies encourages the consideration of *Codex Delilah* as a site and object of performance. I discuss these theories in detail throughout the dissertation. The following section briefly summarizes these ideas and explains how they inform this study of *Codex*

Delilah.

Approaches to Narrative

The field of anthropology has a long history of engagement with the analysis of ritual forms and rites of passage. Concepts from the field of anthropology are applicable to this study because they support a discussion and analysis of ritual as contained in *Codex Delilah.* Arnold Van Gennep's *Rites of Passage* forms the first foundational reading used for the discussion of journey. In cultures worldwide, Van Gennep found that a recurring sequence of actions occurred in rituals that marked changes in social position or life cycle. He defined the repeating series of actions found in these cultural observances as rites of passage and found that they consisted of three stages he termed separation, transition, and incorporation. Van Gennep used the Latin word *limen*, or threshold, to specifically characterize the middle stage of rites of passage.

Work by Victor Turner moves beyond Van Gennep's formulation of rites of passage to examine ritual, process, and aspects of performance within these rites, pilgrimage, and journeys of enlightenment. Turner engaged with Van Gennep's idea of the threshold stage of rites of passage and developed liminality beyond Van Gennep's initial construction. As part of Turner's exploration of liminality, he developed the notion of *communitas*, a sense of community that develops among people who engage in activities with shared goals.

Darlene M. Juscha[13] and E. Alan Morinis[14] criticize Turner's notion of communitas because it tends to flatten out differences such as race, class, and gender, and because fails to recognize conflict as a part of pilgrimage. Juscha takes Turner to task in terms of gender while Morinis demonstrates that in South American pilgrimages, while communitas may form among pilgrimage groups, regional competition also exists. As a result of competition along the pilgrimage path, conflict rather than cooperation and a sense of "oneness" can and does emerge. While their critique of Turner's idea of unmediated equality among pilgrims updates and limits its application, ultimately, this study find communitas valuable as a means to understand the connection between Chicanas and Chicanos promoted by the Chicano Movement.

Gloria Anzaldúa deals with the issues of liminality inherited from Turner but goes beyond Turner's expansion of Van Gennep's work. She has developed the theory *Nepantla* that she posits as a permanent state of being. Anzaldúa took Nepantla, the Central Mexican word for a place in between, to conceptualize a complex and nuanced position of permanent transition. While Nepantla shares some similarities with liminality, Anzaldúa's theory allows and encourages a broader application of the processes of transformation and transitions within the categories of sexuality, gender,

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[13] Darlene M. Juschka, "Whose Turn is it to Cook? Communitas and Pilgrimage Questioned," *Mosaic* 36:4 (December 2003): 189-204.
[14] E. Alan Morinis, "Theoretical Perspectives on Pilgrimage," in *Pilgrimage in the Hindu Tradition: A Case Study of West Bengal* (London: Oxford University Press, 1984), 233-275.

class, and race. Her work is important to this study because of the multiple categories of difference her theory addresses.

Approaches to Journey

Elizabeth Hill Boone and Alberto López Pulido consider the transformative nature of migration and rites of passage in varying times, spanning pre-conquest to contemporary periods. Mesoamerican scholar Elizabeth Hill Boone's work examines the ancient Mesoamerican group known as the Mexica (later termed Aztecs) and the portrayal of their exodus from their island homeland of *Aztlán* in various manuscripts. She traces the Mexica migration from Aztlán through representations in three pictorial accounts, the codices *Boturini*, *Aubin*, and *Azcatítlan*. The journey ends over two hundred years later when the Mexica found their new capital, *Tenochtitlán*. During this span of years, the Mexica endure numerous hardships including poverty, warfare, and enslavement. Boone suggests that the journey resembles a rite of passage that transforms several, initially disparate, bands of the Mexica into a unified people who ascend in power and rule Central Mexico at the time of the Conquest.

Importantly, Boone compares the migration narrative to a drama, a ceremony, and a ritual performance. She also notes that the pictorial representations of the migration resemble a "stage set" and posits drawn human figures as "actors, whose actions bring the story line to life." Within the physical pages of the manuscripts, the sequential installments of the narrative "are like the individual dramatic scenes that

convey both time and location."[15] The "actors" (figures) visually bring the story to life and advance the action with each new event.

Further, she makes another observation important for this study when she argues that the Mexica recreate Aztlán at their new capital city of Tenochtitlán. The structural format of rites of passage mandates a return to the seeker's original place of departure. In contrast, the Mexica conclude their quest for a new homeland at Tenochtitlán and physically do not retrace their migrational path. However, Boone argues that the Mexica complete a rite of passage because, rather than return to Aztlán, they refashion their first homeland at their present capital and, thereby, return to their point of origin.[16]

These ideas, as suggested and developed by Boone, chart a manner of engaging with manuscripts, narrative, and the notion of journey that encourages and supports the positions taken in this dissertation. Strong parallels exist between the Mexica migration and the journey Six-Deer performs in *Codex Delilah*. Boone's analysis of the structure of the *Boturini* and other Mexica migration narratives encourages an application of her ideas to Montoya's contemporary codex. Boone's approach to the figures as actors and the pages of the manuscript as a theatrical space

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[15] Elizabeth Hill Boone, "Migration Histories as Ritual Performance," in *Aztec Ceremonial Landscapes: To Change Place*, ed. Davíd Carrasco (Niwot: University of Colorado Press, 1999), 121.
[16] Ibid., 122, 148.

bear out my notions of the importance of performance as a prime consideration in this study's analysis of *Codex Delilah.* Further, her understanding of Tenochtitlán as a recreated Aztlán, or place of emergence, allows for multiple readings of the narrative sequence of Six-Deer's journey. Boone's work charts a Mesoamerican precedent demonstrating both linear and cyclical notions of journey that creates a model for my interpretation of *Codex Delilah* as a rite of passage and transformative journey.

Similarly, Alberto López Pulido, a professor of Sociology, American, Ethnic, and Religious Studies at San Diego State University, also engages with the notions of migration, transformation, and a return to origins. In two separate studies, Pulido analyzes Chicana/o religious expressions through representations of journeys in Chicana/o literature, such as those found in *Esperanza's Box of Saints*[17] and *Barrio Boy*.[18] He maintains that migration allows individuals to both "spiritually reinscribe" themselves and to reinterpret their history.[19] Further, he considers many migrations undertaken by Chicanas/os as sacred pilgrimages, locates these movements through space and time as central to Chicana/o religious expression, and observes that they create religious and cultural identities inextricably linked to Chicana/o history.

Pulido describes the stages of pilgrimage and notes their parallel structure to

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[17] María Amparo Escandón, *Esperanza's Box of Saints* (New York: Scribner Paperback Fiction, 1999).
[18] Ernesto Galarza, *Barrio Boy* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1971).
[19] Alberto López Pulido, "Chicano Religions through Chicano Literature: Reinscribing Chicano Religions as a Hermeneutics of Movement," *Religion & Literature* 35:2-3 (Summer-Autumn 2003): 68.

rites of passage. However, he rejects the notion of the linear structure of pilgrimage and states that the reincorporation required by these forms need not be a literal return to their starting point.[20] Grounding his arguments in Chicana/o literature (*Pilgrims in Aztlán*),[21] Pulido claims that those who conduct these sacred migrations "can find their homeland at their points of destination" and states further that the pilgrim and those that theorize pilgrimage, "must come to recognize the old place in the new, embracing and celebrating it from this new perspective."[22]

In an earlier study from 2001, Pulido establishes many of the tenets more fully explored in "Chicano Religions through Chicano Literature" and introduces his notion of a "pilgrimage of origins." He argues that, while "pilgrimages of faith and identity" have been fundamental aspects of borderland histories, contemporary Chicana/o migrations involve a rejection and loss of the past because of the embrace of the new, particularly in "South to North crossings."[23] According to Pulido, the pursuit of prosperity encourages both a negation of the Mexican history and entails a fragmentation of Chicana/o identity. In contrast, he proposes his notion of a "pilgrimage of origins" understood as movement, migration, or pilgrimage that

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[20] Ibid.: 77.
[21] Miguel Méndez, *Pilgrims in Aztlán* (Tempe: Bilingual Press, 1992).
[22] Pulido, "Chicano Religions through Chicano Literature," 77.
[23] Alberto López Pulido, "To Arrive is to Begin: Benjamin Sáenz's Carry Me Like Water and the Pilgrimage of Origin in the Borderlands," *Studies in Twentieth Century Literature* 25:1 (Winter 2001): 306.

requires a return to "sacred sources of origin" as a means of acquiring healing and wholeness. Rather than leaving "home," traveling to a remote pilgrimage site, and then returning back to one's original community, the journeys Pulido traces involve an alternate return or homecoming, one of cyclical rather than linear movement.

Drawing from this literary example, Pulido demonstrates that cyclical rather than linear movement and returns to places of origin serve as sites of healing and form an important means of looking at pilgrimage. Importantly, he stresses that this view of pilgrimage and migration accounts for "the social and political forces of cultural assimilation from the dominant culture that demands the rejection of the Chicanas/os' personal and collective past" and that these migrations transform both cultures and identities due to the crossing and transgressing of borders.[24] Pulido's emphasis on the transformation of identity as an integral aspect of pilgrimage points to the central importance of Montoya's historical and cultural exploration of identity in *Codex Delilah*. Further, like Boone, his notion of cyclical pilgrimage enables expanded theoretical readings of the final panel in *Codex Delilah* and the notion of return in rites of passage.

Approaches to Body and Performance

Artist, psychologist, and scholar Amalia Mesa-Bains investigates and theorizes

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[24] Ibid.: 312-313.

the forms of Chicana/o spiritual expression in the arts. In *Ceremony of Spirit,* Mesa-Bains charts the connections between history, memory, and everyday practices of spirituality in Chicana/o art. In *Art of the Other México: Sources and Meanings,* she provides an overview of the core experiences that influence Latina/o and Chicana/o art including an examination of the afterlife and its spiritual context. A more recent essay entitled "Spiritual Visions in Contemporary Art" from *Imágenes e Historias/Images and Histories: Chicana Altar-Inspired Art* further develops her notions of the importance of memory as essential aspect of art concerned with spirituality and the sacred. In this essay, she situates curanderismo (Mexican folk medicine) as central to any discussion of spirituality within Chicana/o art and suggests that this somatic worldview creates the framework for our recognition of the roles of women within healing traditions. This study follows her idea regarding curanderismo and adopts it as a model for examining the bodies and the worldview preformed by the characters in *Codex Delilah.* Mesa-Bains addresses the notion of body as archive as it intersects with performance, spirituality, and the construction of worldview.[25] She looks at how Chicana/o artists represent the body in their works and how they implicate memory and notions of the sacred in its representation. Her observation, "Whether somatic,

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[25] Amalia Mesa-Bains, "Chicano Bodily Aesthetics," in *Body/Culture: Chicano Figuration*, ed. Elizabeth Partch (Rohnert Park: Sonoma State University, 1990), 6-13.

spiritual, political or erotic the meaning of body is held in the text of the figure,"[26] supports the study's position of privileging the body as the primary source of investigation.

Further, Mesa-Bains calls for analysis and "new critical discourse" that this dissertation attempts to provide for *Codex Delilah*.

> Rooted in long tradition of oratory, folktale and literature, visual narrative provides a visual contemporary text. This text consists of mythologies, emblems and a symbolic language that takes its form and subject from a shared history and culture. Our new critical discourse must unlock the layers of meaning which lie beneath the images and symbols of these narratives.[27]

As Mesa-Bains states, the visual narrative in *Codex Delilah* is linked to cultural information passed through oral transmission, daily performance of cultural practices, and written texts arising from Chicana/o experiences. By analyzing the codex's story, symbols, forms, and images, this study seeks to "unlock" the layers of meaning that emerge when viewing the artwork.

Theatre theorist Joseph Roach provides another important perspective in the overlapping considerations of the body and performance that this study conducts. In *Cities of the Dead,* Roach articulates his notion of "genealogies of performance," a

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[26] Ibid., 13.
[27] Ibid., 12.

theory that analyzes how everyday performances transmit history and cultural practices. He states that genealogies of performance "document – and suspect – the historical transmission and dissemination of cultural practices through collective representations." Page 25 Roach explains how these performances reside in the body and how their enactment produces "counter-memories," the difference between memory as produced through discourse and memory as experienced and performed by bodies that bear the "consequences" of history.[28] Roach posits movement as a "mnemonic device" and states that "patterned movements" or actions repeated by the body allow people to psychically "rehearse" behavior drawn from a cultural reserve of shared movement "repertoire."

Scholarship developed by Chéla Sandoval helps this author discuss the raced female body. Sandoval has developed a body of work that suggests an "oppositional consciousness" as a primary mode of being for Chicana feminists, artist, and activists.[29] She has decried the lack of critical engagement with feminism developed by women of color that she has termed "U.S. third world feminism" and aligned her concept of oppositional consciousness with a larger global decolonizing project. Most

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[28] Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).
[29] Chéla Sandoval, "U.S. Third World Feminism: The Theory and Method of Oppositional Consciousness in the Postmodern World," *Genders* 10 (1991): 1-24, Chéla Sandoval, "Mestizaje as Method: Feminists-of-Color Challenge the Canon," in *Living Chicana Theory*, ed. Carla Trujillo (Berkeley: Third Woman Press, 1998), 352-270.

importantly, Sandoval's work allows new subject positions to develop within and simultaneously beyond dominant ideologies and structures of power. Montoya inserts *Codex Delilah* within the decolonizing project of Chicana feminism and Sandoval's ideas enable a deeper consideration of how this artwork engages with and initiates the process of decolonization.

Chapter 1

Codices of the Americas:

Continuity and Transformation

Antepasados/Mesoamerican Antecedents

At the time of European contact, indigenous civilizations throughout Mesoamerica had existing writing traditions. Archeological evidence from the Maya area documents the art and craft of bookmaking ten centuries before the arrival of Columbus.[30] Extant pre-Contact books date from the Mesoamerican Post-Classic period (900-1521 CE) and number less than twenty. Mesoamerican books that withstood the Spanish friars' missionary zeal found their way into primarily European private collections and libraries (Fig 1.1). The surviving pre-Contact books come from three primary areas: 1) the Yucatán Peninsula, 2) the current south Central Mexican states of Oaxaca and Puebla (the Mixtec area), and 3) Central Mexico. These manuscripts respectively record Maya, Mixtec, and Mexica/Aztec[31] history and culture. The Maya codices contain almanacs that record auguries linked to the sacred calendar and narrate celestial events, especially the cycles of the planet Venus.

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[30] Gordon Brotherston, *Painted Books from Mexico: Codices in UK Collections and the World They Represent* (London: British Museum Press, 1995), 11.

[31] Aztec is the term popularly used to describe some of the peoples of Central Mexico. They called themselves Mexica. I combine the terms Mexica/Aztec to honor their original name and include Aztec to clarify the reference.

Codices from the Mixtec area chronicle histories and genealogical records of rulers, such as Eight-Deer Tiger Claw[32] from the *Zouche-Nuttall*.[33] The Mexica/Aztec manuscripts describe cosmological worldviews and depict the Central Mexican calendar.

Pre-Contact manuscripts demonstrate two primary writing traditions in Mesoamerica -- Maya and Mexican. The Maya tradition combines visual imagery with a glyphic writing system that represented an elite language similar to Latin in the European Middle Ages. In contrast, Mexican writing traditions are pictographic in nature and do not correspond with spoken language. The more international character of Central Mexican civilization influenced its writing system because, due to the expansionist mandate of the Mexica/Aztec, the area consisted of different indigenous groups that spoke numerous dialects. Describing this script as "iconic," Gordon Brotherston says "this kind of writing exulted in the capacity to fuse into one visual statement what for us are the separate concepts of letter, art and mathematics."[34]

The *Dresden, Paris, Madrid*, and *Grolier* codices constitute the four existing pre-Contact books from the Maya Lowlands. Scribes known as *ah ts'ib* (he of the

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[32] For more information on the Mixtec codices and this key ruler, see Bruce E. Byland and John M. D. Pohl, *In the Realm of Eight Deer: The Archaeology of the Mixtec Codices* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), John M. D. Pohl, *The Politics of Symbolism in the Mixtec Codices* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University, 1994).
[33] Zelia Nuttall, ed., *The Codex Nuttal: A Picture Manuscript from Ancient Mexico* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1975).
[34] Brotherston, *Painted Books from Mexico*, 12.

writing) and *ak k'u hun* (keeper of the holy books) recorded the information contained in these *hun'ob* (books).[35] Mesoamerican artists made these books from bark paper in the screenfold manner and they vary in length with the longest codex, the *Madrid*, measuring over twenty-two feet. The Maya bookmakers and scribes presented cosmological information in a rectangular format with pages generally two times higher than their width. All of the Maya books contain divinatory material. Maya ceramics and vases provide an excellent visual record of Classic Period scribes and their books. A polychrome ceramic known as "The Scribe Plate" from the Late Classic period (600-900 CE) depicts one of the Hero Twins (figures from Quiché Maya cosmology), *Hunahpú*, writing in an open codex (Fig 1.2).[36] On a polychrome vase from the same period, an enthroned individual gestures to a pile of codices and sits above a closed screenfold codex with jaguar skin covers (Fig. 1.3).

Like most pre-Contact books, the *Dresden Codex* takes its name from its current location, the Royal Saxony Library in Dresden, Germany. Scholars think that the book originated in Cozumel and that Hernán Cortés presented it to King Charles V of Spain as part of the spoils of war. The *Dresden* contains several almanacs that chart the cycles of the sacred Mesoamerican calendar of two hundred-sixty days and depict

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[35] Michel D. Coe and Justin Kerr, *The Art of the Maya Scribe* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 1998), 25.
[36] For an account of the Hero Twins, see Dennis Tedlock, *Popol Vuh: The Mayan Book of the Dawn of Life* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1985), Allen J. Christenson, *Popol Vuh: The Sacred Book of the Maya* (Oakland: O Books, 2004).

gods performing ritual actions. Considered the most beautiful of the Maya codices, scholars have detected as many as eight "hands" or scribes that contributed to its production.[37] Like the *Dresden*, the *Paris* and *Madrid* codices take their names from the cities that house them. The *Grolier Codex* was found in a cave in Tabasco and named after the place it was first exhibited in 1971, the Grolier Club in New York City. Maya priests used these codices to interpret the potential outcome of a specific day and to forecast auspicious or inauspicious days for new undertakings.

The *Becker, Bodley, Colombino, Egerton, Nuttall*, and *Vindobonensis* (*Vienna*) form the group of pre-Contact Mixtec codices. Artists painted all six of these codices on deerskin rather than paper and all follow a screenfold format. These books constitute a different genre than other Mesoamerican manuscripts because they take histories and annals as their primary subject matter as well as the recording of rituals. They often visually construct the descent of Mixtec nobility in specific locations and include significant events in the life of each ruler, such as successful battles, marriages, and births. The Oxford University Library and the British Museum in London, England, currently hold most of these manuscripts.

Known as the Borgia Group, pre-Contact Central Mexican manuscripts include the *Borgia*, *Cospi*, *Féjérváry*, *Itzcuintepec*, *Laud*, and the *Vaticanus B* codices. Only

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[37] Coe and Kerr, *The Art of the Maya Scribe*, 164.

the *Itzcuintepec* codex was written on paper, while the remaining five codices were painted on deerskin. *Tlamatinime* (possessors of the earth in hand) or sages developed the material in these books and a *tlacuilo*, meaning painter or scribe, created their visual presentation.[38] Central Mexican books, like those of the Maya, contained religious and divinatory information linked to the sacred calendar (*tonalpohualli*) and recorded this area's cosmological pantheon. Only the nobility, spiritual specialists – especially diviners, and high-ranking members of the government consulted and used the codices. Unlike the Maya codices, these books generally have a square format.

In her overview of Central Mexican pictorial histories, Elizabeth Hill Boone discusses the conventions employed by Mexican history painters of the pre and post-contact periods.[39] These ancient artists devised various strategies for the material preservation of history and culture including; 1) annals, 2) *res gestaes*, 3) cartographic histories, and another variant she termed 4) blended structures. While these assorted modes of painted history illustrate time, place, or events, each kind of presentation depicts these elements to varying degrees. Annals or time-line histories emphasize the sequence of years and record events from each successive year whether politically or

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[38] Laura Pérez suggests that contemporary Chicana artists "conflate" the roles of tlacuilo or glyphmaker and tlamatini or sage and therefore assume the roles of teacher and healer. Please see Laura E. Pérez, "Spirit Glyphs: Reimagining Art and Artist in the Work of Chicana Tlamatinime," *Modern Fiction Studies* 44:1 (1998): 36-76.

[39] For more information, see Chapter 4, "Structures of History," in Elizabeth Hill Boone, *Stories in Red and Black: Pictorial Histories of the Aztec and Mixtecs* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), 65-86.

socially significant or not. These works fix moments in time by placing representations of the year's most important events next to the sign for the specific year. Res gestae histories organize events by their relationship to each other, not by sequential cycles of time. They emphasize a specific theme or subject matter and connect events regardless of location. Cartographic histories create another strategy used by ancient artists of the Americas to record the significant places and spaces in their lives. This map-based form of history accentuates movement through space and emphasizes place to the detriment of other considerations. Boone's proposed "blended structures" intertwine place and action by merging res gestae-styled events with cartographic detail.

Ironically, post-Contact books document the destruction of their pre-Contact predecessors. In the late 1580s, Diego Muñoz Camargo compiled the *Historia de Tlaxcala*, a three-part post-Contact manuscript that contained a pictorial section entitled the *Tlaxcala Codex*.[40] This pictorial section contains one hundred-fifty drawings. Many of these illustrations resemble those found in another manuscript from the same period, the *Lienzo de Tlaxcala*. Folio 13 of the *Tlaxcala Codex* records the destruction of books, ritual clothing, and sacred implements in the Central Mexican area (see Fig. 1.1). In another historical document, the *Relación de las Cosas*

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[40] Diego Muñoz Camargo, *Historia de Tlaxcala* (Tlaxcala: Gobierno del Estado de Tlaxcala: Universidad Autónoma de Tlaxcala, 1998).

de Yucatán, Franciscan bishop Diego de Landa recorded an eyewitness account of the burning of Maya books he conducted on July 12, 1562.

> Those people also used certain characters or letters, with which they wrote in their books about the antiquities and their sciences….We found a great number of books in these letters, and since they contained nothing but superstitions and falsehoods of the devil we burned them all, which they took most grievously, and which gave them great pain. [41]

De Landa conducted this *Auto da Fé* as part of a larger campaign of missionary activity in the city of Maní and throughout the larger Maya area.

Despite these attempts at eradication, the use of the codex form continued after the conquest when new versions and practices appeared. Working with Spanish clergy and scholars, native scribes began to use a European format, European paper, and other European conventions while continuing some native traditions. After the Conquest in 1521, books from Central Mexico often contained text written in Náhuatl with explanatory Spanish glosses in combination with Mexica/Aztec pictographs and glyphs. Under Spanish supervision, Native scribes responded to a mandate by Charles V and produced an important post-contact manuscript, *Codex Mendoza*, in 1541. Antonio de Mendoza, the Viceroy of New Spain in power at the time, graciously lent his name to the manuscript. After a tumultuous history of owners, the Bodleian Library at Oxford University has housed the work since 1659. The *Mendoza* provides

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[41] Diego de Landa, *Relación de las Cosas de Yucatán* (New York: Dover Publications, 1978).

a wide range of information on Mexica/Aztec life including marriage ceremonies, child rearing practices, education, clothing, political organization, the economic system, and the kinds and amounts of tribute required from their subjects. Frances F. Berdan and Patricia Rieff Anawalt refer to it as a "Rosetta Stone for Mesoamerican studies"[42] because it serves as a vast compendium of knowledge about Mexica/Aztec life and culture.

This previous section briefly describes the variety of extant pre-Contact Mesoamerican codices in terms of content, materials, writing tradition, strategies of presentation, present locations, and how codex traditions transformed in the colonial period. Additionally, like subject matter and modes of presentation, the formal conventions of these books differ by region. In general, viewers will notice a flattening of space with figural and narrative elements placed without a concern for depth. The pre-Contact works, along with many of the post-Contact books, lack both a three-dimensional presentation and orientation in space and a clear definition of foreground, middle ground, and background. Further, these books demonstrate a profound linear presentation where the element of line predominates, especially in Maya books because scribes created entire panels of glyphic texts with delicate, thin brushstrokes. Similarly, the artists who fashioned the pictorial narrative in the *Codex Boturini* and

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[42] Frances F. Berdan and Patricia Rieff Anawalt, *The Essential Codex Mendoza* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), xii.

other codices from Central Mexico used line as their method of representation. Finally, while Mixtec artists used line to direct the reader through the codices, they also applied concentrated blocks of pigment to depict ruling kings, other political figures, and architectural structures. These artists created heavy black outlines and filled the resulting shapes with intense colors. Maya artists also used concentrated blocks of color to enhance their work. While these artists formed the *Dresden* primarily with carefully crafted contours, on certain panels of the books deity figures received applications of "Maya blue" and other pigments. Having considered the Mesoamerican artistic tradition as represented in its books, the next section of this chapter examines how these traditions shape the content and visual presentation of *Codex Delilah.*

Codex Delilah **and Its Mesoamerican Book Conventions**

A detailed formal analysis of *Codex Delilah* follows in Chapter 2. However, having just described the methods of recording history and cultural information used by Mesoamerican artists and scribes, this section of the chapter briefly outlines the structures Montoya adopts to shape her codex "Mesoamerican style." It considers what aspects of annals, res gestaes, almanacs, and cartographic histories the artist presented in *Codex Delilah* (Fig. 1.4).

Like an annal, Montoya presents time in *Codex Delilah* in a sequential, linear, and Western fashion. However, she incongruously uses Maya glyphs, based in the

calendric notion of Mesoamerican cyclical time, to date each panel. *Codex Delilah*, in direct contrast to an annal, advances in irregular blocks of time instead of each succeeding year as required by the annal form. The artist presents her histories by linking events to dates significant from a Western perspective. The first four dates in *Codex Delilah* record the history of various conquests. The first panel, dated 1401 but understood as 1492,[43] signals to Western viewers the approaching arrival of Columbus in the Americas, one in a series of European contacts or "encounters." The second panel, dated 1519, records the debarking of Spanish Conquistador Hernán Cortés at Cozumel (among other locations) that constitutes a major step in his later conquest of Central Mexico for the Spanish Crown (1521). The third panel in Montoya's codex recalls the appearance of the Virgin of Guadalupe to Juan Diego on the hill of Tepeyac in 1531.[44] Guadalupe symbolizes the syncretic fusion of indigenous and Spanish religious traditions and, as such, records another form of conquest, a spiritual conquest. During the colonial period, the indigenous earth goddess *Tonantzin* became subsumed under the European figure of the Virgin Mary. The fourth panel, dated

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[43] Montoya had difficulty assembling the glyphs to create "1492." Although she envisioned that this page's events occurred in 1492, the Maya glyph series actually "reads" 1401. This echoes dating mistakes made by pre-Contact codex makers and, although not intentional, Montoya keeps this Mesoamerica tradition of "scribal error."

[44] Carla Trujillo, "La Virgen de Guadalupe and Her Reconstruction in Chicana Lesbian Desire," in *Living Chicana Theory*, ed. Carla Trujillo (Berkeley: Third Woman Press, 1998), 229. Trujillo cites an account entitled *The Chronicle of Don Antonio Valeriano,* translated by Velásquez and Hoyt in 1931 that identifies Juan Diego as a *Chichimeca*, born in 1474, with the Náhuatl birth name of "He who speaks like an eagle" or *Cuautlaohuac*.

1687, portrays another physical and spiritual conquest that represents lost land and the eradication of native inhabitants. Montoya uses the figure of La Conquistadora, the Virgin of the Conquest, to show the "Reconquest" of Pueblan peoples in New Mexico.

In the following two panels, again framed within a Western point of view, Montoya presents historical accounts that counter the process of conquest. The artist visually links the Mexican Revolution of 1910 and *El Movimiento,* the movement for the civil rights of Chicanos, dated 1969 in this telling, by placing these stories on succeeding pages in her codex. In a sharp departure from the previous six panels, the artist frames the final panel of the codex from an indigenous viewpoint. She dates this panel 2012 CE, understood in the Maya Calendar as the end of the current era. Montoya links this date with a process of healing initiated by her characters that restores balance and harmony to the earth and its peoples. Even from this brief discussion, time emerges as a significant factor in Montoya's work. Since the codex advances in irregular blocks of time rather than by each following year, it does not fulfill the strict requirements of the annal or time-line mode of history. However, Montoya parallels this form of Mesoamerica codex with her treatment and emphasizes the Mesoamerican preoccupation with time as a major element of *Codex Delilah*.

In addition to time-line histories or annals, Central Mexican artists produced another version of events-oriented history known as the res gestae as just noted. These records organize their histories around a specific theme or subject matter and connect

events without concern for time or location.[45] Initially, *Codex Delilah* appears to a fall under this category of historical record because the artist clustered its events around the overarching trope of Six-Deer's journey. However, Montoya inexorably links time and event in *Codex Delilah*. The viewer perceives each challenge Six-Deer faces as anchored within the larger dimension of its historically significant date. Additionally, *Codex Delilah* equally interweaves the notion of place and the concept of time with specific events. Because of the intimate connection among the critical aspects of time, event, and place found in *Codex Delilah*, the codex again does not solely follow the res gestae account of history, although various themes such as conquest and resistance to oppression emerge throughout the work.

Almanacs constitute another kind of recorded information found in Mesoamerican codices. During the making of this artwork, Maya codices heavily influenced Montoya, codices that contain almanacs recording positive and negative auguries linked to the sacred calendar. Can we identity any impact of these almanacs on the structure or content of *Codex Delilah*? The *Dresden Codex* contains several almanacs charting the sacred calendar of two hundred-sixty days and depicts gods performing ritual actions. These portrayals combine text and image to reveal standardized auguries used by spiritual specialists to interpret the potential outcome of

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[45] Boone, *Stories in Red and Black*, 70.

a specific day. In contrast, the only prognostication made in *Codex Delilah* occurs in the second panel when the character Llora-Llora-Malinche tells Six-Deer that she will bear a child. Additionally, the sequences between each page in Montoya's codex do not correspond to any specific Mesoamerican calendric cycle. Therefore, since *Codex Delilah* contains only one augury and does not exhibit dates linked to established calendric forms, it only tangentially suggests the almanac form of Mesoamerican codices.

Cartographic histories or maps create another strategy used by ancient artists of the Americas to record the significant spaces in their lives. These histories emphasize place to the absence or detriment of most other considerations. Montoya emphasizes location in her codex in three ways: 1) in the second registers she indicates the shape of Six-Deer's journey with footprints, 2) in the third registers she situates the events within a specific geographic site by using color photographs, and 3) in the fourth registers she names each location in a computer-generated text. Later chapters analyze *Codex Delilah's* concern with place in greater detail.

As demonstrated, Montoya borrows elements from each mode of presentation created by ancient Central Mexican history painters including annals, res gestaes, almanacs, and cartographic histories. First, *Codex Delilah* adapts components from the annal form when the artist uses time as a central factor to structure the work and advance its narrative. However, the codex does not follow the most important

convention of this kind of history by measuring time in precisely sequential years. Second, Montoya's work also contains elements present in res gestae histories because the codex's events center on certain themes and drive the progress of time rather than simply recording the significant actions of a particular period. Third, the artist minimally adopts traditions from the almanac form because she does not overtly link her events to a known sacred calendric cycle, nor does she present a significant number of prognostications. Fourth, the artist continues cartographic or place-based traditions by first presenting a photograph of the specific site in the third register of every page of the codex. The story reveals the distinctive qualities of each location with image, the character's body, or particular references in the computer-generated text. Six-Deer's footprints, styled after those in the *Codex Boturini* and many other Central Mexican codices, chart a journey taken by the story's main character. This journey, while not constructing an actual navigational map, delineates movement through space. Therefore, rather than one concept or codex form emerging as the single factor that shapes the work, a balanced combination of time, significant places, and critical actions propels and structures the presentation and mixed genre of *Codex Delilah*. This section of the chapter considered how Montoya referred to various strategies of presentation of historical and other kinds of material in ancient codices. The next section of the chapter considers the use and development of the Mesoamerican codex form by contemporary Chicana and Chicano artists.

***Compañeras/os*: Contemporary Chicana/o Companions**

The contemporary adaptation of the Mesoamerica book form by Chicana/o artists draws inspiration from ancient models, reflects an artistic inheritance from Mesoamerica, and establishes continuity between ancient and contemporary forms. The earliest reference to the codex form within Chicana/o art production may be Santa Contreras Barraza's *Una Vida Continua (A Life Continues)* from 1984 (Fig. 1.5). Other artists, such as Rubén Trejo and Enrique Chagoya,[46] have also developed contemporary codices that refer to Mesoamerican *antepasados* (ancestors). Still others, notably Celia Álvarez Muñoz, have investigated the conversation between image and text and explored the loss of childhood innocence as a central theme within art pieces that resemble and yet go beyond a simple definition of book-like works. These important works by Muñoz, briefly outlined first, cannot be considered codices as I have defined them in this study. This section of the dissertation then analyzes the phenomena of Chicana/o codices: those that pre-date the 1992 exhibition such as Barraza's, those produced outside the exhibition either concurrently or later, and

[46] Painter and printmaker Enrique Chagoya was born in Mexico and currently works in the United States of North America. Technically a Mexican artist, rather than a Chicano artist, I include Chagoya's work in this discussion because of his continuing interrogation of the codex form. Art historians often discuss Chagoya concurrently with Chicana/o artists. For example, please see the profile on Chagoya in Volume 1 of Gary D. Keller et al., *Contemporary Chicana and Chicano Art: Artists, Works, Culture, and Education*, 2 vols. (Tempe: Bilingual Press/Editorial Bilingüe, 2002), 128-129.

finally, those developed specifically for the "Chicano Codices" exhibition.[47]

Celia Álvarez Muñoz: The *Enlightenment Series*

Celia Álvarez Muñoz produced a series of ten works between 1980 and 1985 entitled the *Enlightenment Series*, some of which take the form of books and somewhat resemble codices. I briefly mention the series here because the artist's themes parallel many of the ideas explored in *Codex Delilah* and in the "Chicano Codices" exhibition. Muñoz's series engaged with the issues of personal and social transformation and sought to interrogate the dialectic between the person and their cultural influences. The artist used both words and images to explore her adult memory of formative childhood experiences. Some of the pieces in the series consist of the more traditional wall-mounted photographic images with texts, while others evidence an enthusiastic experimentation with form. *Enlightenment #1: Chispas Quemenme* (1980-1982), *Enlightenment #2: Double Bubble and WWII* (1980-1982), and *Enlightenment #6: El Espiritu Malo* (1982-1983) (Fig. 1.6) create a group of these less traditional pieces. *Enlightenment #1* used the matchbook form to contain five works that measured eight and one half by eleven inches. These mixed media works recounted Muñoz's playful and spontaneous beheading her grandmother's *santos*

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[47] In 2000, D. Vanessa Kam produced an exhibition entitled "Poetics, Politics, and Song: Contemporary Latin American/Latino(a) Artists' Books" at Yale University's Stirling Memorial Library. The show exhibited works from the 70s to the 90s produced by artists throughout Latin America including Cecilia Vicuña, Leandro Katz, Felipe Ehrenberg, Josely Carvalho, and Enrique Chagoya.

(figures of saints). She used the matchbook form again in *Enlightenment #2* on a much smaller scale when she inserted ten small pages with images and text inside a pink matchbook. Measuring slightly over four inches, the pages of his work document her memories of using WW II ration books to buy bubble gum. *Enlightenment #6* more closely resembles a codex because its accordion folds open into six pages of photographs and text that have a rectangular dimension like Maya books. This work recorded treatment meted out for childhood tantrums; a shower outside with a rubber hose, an event especially welcome during the summer months. While this series forms an important moment in Muñoz's artistic production, ultimately she takes her inspiration from conceptual art and values the engagement with words over referencing an ancient American artistic tradition.

Santa Contreras Barraza: *Una Vida Continua* (A Life Continues)

Santa Contreras Barraza[48] produced *Una Vida Continua (A Life Continues)* in 1984 or 1985[49] and referred to the work as, "my first attempt to use the pre-Columbian

[48] Santa Contreras Barraza is currently the director of the Department of Art at Texas A&M in Kingsville, Texas. For information about her work, see Santa Contreras Barraza, "Manifestations of the Struggling Inner Force" (MFA Thesis, University of Texas, 1982), María Herrera-Sobek, ed., *Santa Barraza, Artist of the Borderlands* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2001), Constance Cortéz, "Aztlán in Tejas: Chicano/a Art from the Third Coast," in *Chicano Visions: American Painters on the Verge* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, Inc., 2002), 32-42.

[49] Published accounts of the exact year of production vary. *The Road to Aztlan* published the work with a date of 1985, while *Artist of the Borderlands* published the date as 1984.

codex as a format for personal expression."[50] At that time, the Zavala Elementary School in Austin, Texas, invited her to serve as a guest artist and she devised a project where students made individualized codices based on Mesoamerican models. In conjunction with the student project, Barraza created *Una Vida Continua.* Constructed of mixed media, the work consisted of three separate elements: an artist's book or codex, an embroidered cloth pouch, and another codex-like object bound with ribbon. When fashioning her artist's book, the artist adopted the screenfold format and created a single-sided piece that measured forty inches long by ten inches high. She divided the work into eight individual panels with each panel almost twice as high as it is wide. Using a collage technique, the artist placed photographs, drawings, excerpts from handwritten letters, painted images, and satin ribbon of various hues on each panel. Barraza wanted the work to resemble a Central Mexican ritual book and created a "lineage of women" by placing images of Coatlicue, the Virgin of Guadalupe, and her daughter on its pages.[51] Additionally, she emphasized genealogy when she asked members of her family to autograph the reverse of the first panel.

The red cloth pouch that forms the complementary part of this work appears to be a talisman or sacred bag, the kind often worn around the neck for protection or at the waist for healing, similar to those carried by ancient and contemporary indigenous

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[50] Herrera-Sobek, ed., *Santa Barraza, Artist of the Borderlands*, 42.
[51] Ibid.

spiritual specialists. Barraza outlined the pouch with two rows of hand-stitched embroidery and ornamented it with sequins. A royal blue overcast stitch runs along the outside, ends in small tassels on the bottom of the bag, and a complementary orange zigzag pattern lies just inside the blue stitching. On the bag's top flap, the artist embroidered a small figure of a girl and attached an image of the Virgin of Guadalupe in the upper left hand corner, perhaps to consecrate or imbue the pouch with power.

The final element in the work remains somewhat mysterious because the artist bound a small book-like object with lengths of white, red, and green satin ribbon, the colors of the Mexican flag. Tied like a gift, but without a bow, the ribbon prevents access to the piece's interior surfaces. The outside portion of this object consists of a painted portrait of the Virgin of Guadalupe, an image that repeats the reference from the work's other elements. Barraza depicted only the upper portion of Guadalupe's body and followed a relatively traditional rendering. The artist included a blue mantle festooned with stars over a red garment and a radiating *mandorla* or halo around the Virgin's head and shoulders. However, Barraza strayed from convention when she attached two small images from the *lotería* (Mexican bingo) immediately to the left and right of the Virgin's face. Not surprisingly, she placed the image of *El Corazón* (The Heart) on the left-hand side of the portrait, the side nearest the heart. In the *El Corazón* image from the lotería, an arrow pierces an anatomical representation of the heart. The artist may be referring to the Sacred Heart of Jesus or the Sorrowful Virgin

(*Nuestra Señora de Dolores*).[52] On the right-hand side of the portrait, Barraza placed *La Chalupa* (The Boat), a reed boat like those that traveled Tenochtitlán's watery by-ways. Perhaps the artist intends to indicate a personal relationship with the Virgin with this reference because the saying associated with this lotería image uses Lupita, the familiar term for Guadalupe, "*Rema y rema va lupita, sentada en su chalupita* (Paddle and paddle goes Lupita, seated in her little boat)." Moreover, Barraza's use of Guadalupe and Coatlicue reflects her awareness of deities and other sacred information present in many Mesoamerican codices and parallels Delilah Montoya's inclusion of family members and female figures from the Chicana/o pantheon in *Codex Delilah*.

Enrique Chagoya: *Tales of the Conquest* and *Codex Espangliensis*

Another artist who has produced contemporary codices is Enrique Chagoya. Born in Mexico City in 1953, Chagoya immigrated to the United States in 1977 where he maintains an active artistic and teaching practice in the San Francisco Bay Area. Chagoya has produced a number of codices that include references to Mesoamerica models and iconography, most notably *Tales of the Conquest – Codex II* (1992) (Fig. 1.7) and *Codex Espangliensis: From Columbus to the Border Patrol* (2000). He

[52] Chicana/o artists often use the Sacred Heart of Jesus as an image or element of iconography in their art. It originates from Catholic devotion and Chicana/o artists often conflate it with Mesoamerican practices of heart sacrifice. Please see Amalia Mesa-Bains and Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, *Lo del corazón: Heartbeat of a Culture* (San Francisco: The Mexican Museum, 1986), Olivier Debroise, *El corazón sangrante* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991).

produced *Codex Espangliensis* with performance artist Guillermo Gómez-Peña after their earlier collaboration in *Friendly Cannibals* (1996).[53]

Chagoya states that his art production was forever altered when he learned about Mesoamerican writing. This knowledge prompted him to develop a series of works that "mimic" the screenfold format and provide a vehicle for contemplating the "continuities and discontinuities" of history.[54] Using handmade paper, he organized *Tales of the Conquest* in a rectangular horizontal format of ten panels that contain an astonishing mix of images in startling juxtapositions. Chagoya superimposes popular American cartoon figure Superman over images from Central Mexican and Mixtec codices, pictures a monster from the crypt holding a colonial treatment of *El Mano Poderosa* (The Powerful Hand), and shows Wonder Woman and the Virgin of Guadalupe in conversation. In a particularly poignant rendering, he depicts a scribe painting a portrait with a thin reed or stick and overlays the entire scene with Salvador Dali's *Persistence of Memory* (1931) and Pablo Picasso's *Les Desmoiselles d'Avignon* (1907). Chagoya's treatment equates the work of Mesoamerican and post-contact Native scribes with important works produced by noted European artists.

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[53] *Friendly Cannibals* does not strictly use an ancient American codex form and will not be discussed here. Enrique Chagoya and Guillermo Gómez-Peña, *Friendly Cannibals* (San Francisco: Artspace Books, 1996), Enrique Chagoya, Guillermo Gómez-Peña, and Felicia Rice, *Codex Espangliensis: From Columbus to the Border Patrol* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2000).

[54] Enrique Chagoya, "A Lost Continent: Writings without an Alphabet," in *The Road to Aztlan: Art from a Mythic Homeland*, ed. Virginia M. Fields and Victor Zamudio-Taylor (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2001), 262-263.

In the later work, *Codex Espangliensis: From Columbus to the Border Patrol*, Chagoya and Gómez-Peña's attempted a much larger and more nuanced project. In 1991, Chicano poet laureate Francisco X. Alarcón suggested to Felicia Rice, director of Moving Parts Press, that Chagoya and Gómez-Peña might be interested in working together on a collaborative book project. In October of 1992, she approached the artists with her proposal. She asked them to produce a "post-Columbian" codex that addressed the issues of NAFTA, globalization, and identity politics and commented on the overall tenor of California in the early 90s with its legislative attacks on the rights of immigrants and the Spanish language. The trio completed the project in January of 1998.[55]

Moving Parts Press first issued *Codex Espangliensis* in a hand-colored limited edition of fifty.[56] In 2000, City Lights in San Francisco produced an affordable version for public consumption with some slight modifications from the first edition. The work consists of thirty-two interior panels enclosed in heavier red and black covers and measures thirty-one feet when fully extended. The artists and Rice designed the book's reading order from back to front. Chagoya used some of the same panels from *Tales* in the work and continued his formal approach from the earlier codex. In this

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[55] The information in this paragraph was taken from the unpaginated essays that accompany the City Lights edition of 2000.
[56] The National Hispanic Cultural Center (NHCC) in Albuquerque, New Mexico, holds the second book in the limited edition of fifty in their permanent collections.

work, he combined images of pre-Contact ceramic figures, Teotihuacán jadeite masks, figures from the Mixtec codices, cartoon figures such as Mickey Mouse, and European anatomical and architectural drawings with texts written by Gómez-Peña.

In the twenty-sixth folio from the 2000 City Lights edition, Superman and Wonder Woman fight with the masked and fully costumed Nezahualcoyotl, the poet-king of Texcoco as pictured in Part 2 of the colonial *Codex Ixtlilxochitl* (1582). Nezahualcoyotl carries a feather work shield and brandishes an obsidian-laden *macuahuitl* (club). Superman rebounds from a well-placed blow, while Wonder Woman flies toward the king's feather-covered head with fists clenched. Following cartoon convention, a speech bubble emerges from Superman's mouth declaring "WHOOF! NO GOOD! The Texcoco poet-king has vanquished the American super-heroes. Gómez-Peña's accompanying text provides an alternate history, " In November 1512, the omni-potent Aztecs began the conquest of Europzin in the name of thy father Tezcatlipoca, lord of cross-cultural misunderstandings…"

Rubén Trejo: *Codex for the 21st Century* and the *Joaquín* Series

Rubén Trejo participated in the "Chicano Codices" exhibit in 1992 and created *Codex Trejo: Tarascans in Minnesota,* discussed in the following section. In 1997, he produced a very different work, *Codex for the 21st Century*, later acquired by the Smithsonian Museum of American Art. *Codex for the 21st Century* consisted of one hundred pairs of bent and welded nails, perhaps an unlikely media for a codex. This

work begins a series of formally interrelated pieces where the artist uses nails and later railroad spikes as the primary sculptural medium. A glance at Trejo's origins quickly explains this use. In 1937, Trejo was born in a boxcar in St. Paul, Minnesota, to Tarascan immigrant parents. His father worked on the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy (CB&Q) railroad while he, his mother, and six siblings worked as migrants.[57] Trejo spent much of his childhood in the Minnesota rail yards, and his choice of materials reflects this early history.

Codex for the 21st Century is a very large-scale work that generally takes up an entire wall of the gallery or exhibition space because it measures five feet high and twenty feet long. The relationship between each pair of nails is unique and according to Jonathan Yorba can be altered to create new formal relationships and therefore, new meanings.[58] The work creates a mysterious linguistic universe, a universe parallel to that of glyphic texts and pictographs from Mesoamerican codices. When asked about the work, Trejo explained his sculptural process and the associations some viewers brought to the work.

> The work is about process, it's about downright feeling. I like working in bronze casting and welded pieces. I like heating things up and bending them…Some time ago I began working with railroad spikes, bending them, and at first they looked like

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[57] Bárbara Loste, "An Interview with Artist Rubén Trejo," *Latino Studies* 1:3 (2003): 452.
[58] Jonathan Yorba, *Arte Latino: Treasures from the Smithsonian American Art Museum* (New York: Watson-Guptill Publications, 2001), 90.

> worms. But I noticed that they also had a sense of romance, like couples making love. So somebody said, "Rubén, this looks like the Kama Sutra." Who knows. The piece pushes beyond the idea of "Latino" or "Chicano," even though visually it suggests a pre-Columbian codex.[59]

Two years later in 1999, Trejo produced three more works that took inspiration from the codex form, *Joaquín/Walking Spikes*, *Joaquín/Walking/Codex II*, and *Joaquín III.* All of these works are on a smaller scale than *Codex for the 21st Century,* each use only railroad spikes as their material, and all are made up of a series of square forms arranged in varying patterns. Trejo welded several spikes together to create each form's external square border and then attached bent spikes inside the square frame. As a result, all of the works resemble quilts made of metal. The artist donated *Joaquín/Walking Spikes* to the permanent collection of the National Hispanic Cultural Center (NHCC) in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Because Trejo encouraged a variety of installation formats, the NHCC attached the individually framed units to a rectilinear grid and exhibited the work in both rectangular and vertical groupings on differing occasions.[60]

The artist forged the remaining works in the series, *Joaquín/Walking/Codex II* and *Joaquín III,* in similar fashion. Speaking of the last work in the series, *Joaquín III*, Trejo acknowledged the issues of form and writing as part of Mesoamerica artistic

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[59] Loste, "An Interview with Artist Rubén Trejo," 453-454.
[60] Personal communication with Andrew Connors, Curator, NHCC, 27 January 2005.

tradition when he stated, "I invented a language with nails based on the idea of a pre-Columbian codex with guys walking around in headdresses."[61] Trejo's sense of humor declares itself loudly in the titles of this series, because the Spanish name "Joaquín" when pronounced aloud sounds very similar to the English word "walking." Trejo's "Joaquín" is actually a human figure formed by bent spikes that meanders through every frame in the series.

In their contemporary codices, these Chicana/o artists used a variety of strategies from their Mesoamerican predecessors. Barraza emphasized the religious and spiritual concerns of the original codices with the subject matter of her codex, adopted the screenfold form, organized the work according to Central Mexican models, and recorded a genealogy like those in the Mixtec codices. She updated and transformed the codex form by constructing a female lineage, not of rulers, but one of goddesses, holy figures, and ordinary women. Chagoya incorporated appropriated images from existing pre and post-contact codices, repeatedly used the screenfold form, and intended his images to honor and parallel pre-Contact non-alphabetic writing. Yet, his work is uniquely contemporary and reflects the increasingly transnational and hybrid nature of post-modern life, especially because of the references to the popular cultures of Mexico and mainstream America as well as

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[61] Loste, "An Interview with Artist Rubén Trejo," 454.

Chicana/o popular culture. Trejo based his work conceptually on Mesoamerican models and his sculptural forms repeated the panel format from these books, although these works appear materially less like "books" than those of Barraza and Chagoya. The malleability of Trejo's work and its presentation or format, left up to the museum curator or gallery owner's discretion, echoes the Mesoamerica convention of priests and diviners using the codices as "prompt books." Codices often recorded the minimal details of histories or rituals. The priest or interpreter of the codex used the images and texts as a springboard for improvisation within a public recitation of the material. Therefore, the books became the basis for the performance by oral transmission of history, ritual, and cultural knowledge. Trejo's encouragement of variable format for *Joaquín/Walking Spikes* (and probably the other works as well) places the curator or gallery professional in the position of interpreter. Trejo's reference to family history, his interest in creating an unique visual language, and the use of an unusual material inspired his update of the codex form. This concludes the overview of selected works by Chicana/o artists who explored the codex form before, concurrently, and after the exhibition at The Mexican Museum. We will see these and other strategies used by Chicana/o artists for the codices produced for the 1992 show as discussed in the next section.

"The Chicano Codices: En*counter*ing Art of the Americas"

This section of the dissertation provides an overview of the exhibition "The

Chicano Codices" and demonstrates the range and complexity of the works created for the show. I illustrate how Sanchez-Tranquilino's vision of the exhibit, the artists' memories, and the artists' personal lives influenced the production of these codices. I also demonstrate connections between the Chicano codices and their Mesoamerican precedents and between the Chicano codices and *Codex Delilah*. Before I begin an analysis of selected artworks produced for the show, I provide a brief overview of how the themes of spirituality and the sacred emerged in the exhibition. I also comment on these themes in the following discussion of individual works when appropriate.

Of the thirty artists Sanchez-Tranquilino invited to participate in "The Chicano Codices: En*countering* Art of the Americas," ultimately twenty-six artists produced twenty-five works. Artists Wayne Alaniz Healy and Davíd Rivas Botello collaborated on their work and writer Cecilio García-Camarillo assisted Delilah Montoya with the text in *Codex Delilah.* The group of twenty-six artists responded to Sanchez-Tranquilino's call for contemporary codices with an exceedingly diverse output in form, content, and media. In the letter of invitation, in the museum, and in his catalog essay, Sanchez-Tranquilino thematically conceived the works into four groups: 1) Red: Return and Perseverance, 2) Yellow: Identity and Continuity, 3) White: Divine Gifts and Earthly Duties,[62] and 4) Black: Patrimony and Consequence. In the invitation

[62] Sanchez-Tranquilino discussed Montoya's work in this section of his essay. Please see Marcos

letter, he asked the artists to consider how their works might address these four categories and, in their artist proposals, most artists indicated how their projected works would satisfy a particular category's theme. In the gallery, Sanchez-Tranquilino used the colors that symbolize the four directions from indigenous cosmologies to orient the viewer to the central ideas addressed in the exhibition. Rather than "exclusive" categories, he viewed these sections as "…entries that…all meet or overlap at the center."[63]

Although Sanchez-Tranquilino set out rather specific guidelines for the requested works, he did not emphasize religion as a theme or suggest that the artists incorporate issues of spirituality in their codices. Nevertheless, the issue of spirituality and the sacred emerged in many of the works. The portrayal of spirituality in works created for the exhibit often connected the sacred to a specific location, where the artist linked land or nature with ritual practices and other expressions of spirituality. Carmen Lomas Garza emphasized the austere beauty of the South Texas landscape of Kingsville where she grew up. Her codex illustrated how plants indigenous to this area promoted health and provided alternate methods of healing. Michael Amescua portrayed the exchange and interconnection among animals, humans, and the earth. In

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Sanchez-Tranquilino, "The Chicano Codices: Feathered Reflections on an Aztlánic Archaeology," in *The Chicano Codices: Encountering Art of the Americas*, ed. Patricia Draher (San Francisco: The Mexican Museum, 1992), 4-19.

[63] Ibid., 4.

Carlos Frésquez's work, a hybrid character, both human and animal, thrived within an untamed landscape to show that, despite the overlay of Christianity and a mentality of mastery rather than cooperation, both the natural world and indigenous ways of life endure. *Codex East Los Streetscapers* referred to the Virgin of Guadalupe and the church as a fundamental parts of Chicana/o life. Artists Healy and Botello embedded ritual practices associated with *Día de los Muertos* (Day of the Dead) in the terrain and daily fabric of "East Los" life. In *Codex Raya*, Marcos Raya used *Xipe Totec*, the Central Mexican male god of fertility, to emphasize the precarious balance between nature and human beings. Emmanuel Catarino Montoya encapsulated his exploration of mixed ethnic identity within the sacred symbolic form of a circle.

In contrast to Sanchez-Tranquilino, to discuss the exhibition I group the works by format rather than by theme. My groups include: 1) seven two-dimensional or primarily flat works, 2) three mixed two and three-dimensional works or installations, 3) five screenfold style works, 4) three nichos or cajitas, and 5) seven large sculptural works. This study will now discuss some aspects of the twenty-five works that comprised "The Chicano Codices" exhibition using the five categories outlined. I include this analysis to demonstrate how *Codex Delilah* corresponds with the exhibition codices in terms of symbols, materials, and issues, and emphasize the treatment of the sacred.

"The Chicano Codices": Two Dimensional Works

Barbara Carrasco, the team of Wayne Alaniz Healy and David Rivas Botello, Willie F. Herron, Emmanuel Catarino Montoya, Manuel "Spain Rodríguez, Marta Sánchez, and Rubén Trejo created primarily two-dimensional works for the exhibition. I include an expanded analysis of Carrasco's work to illustrate how spirituality emerges from her narrative of childhood. And, because of his treatment of spirituality and indigenous identity resembles Delilah Montoya's, a more detailed description of Emmanuel C. Montoya's work follows. Then, I briefly outline the works produced by other artists in this group.

Barbara Carrasco (b. 1955) used a variety of media to create *Codex Carrasco: Projex*, and, like many of the artists in the exhibition, she placed images of relatives and fragments of family stories in her work. The artist formed *Projex* from a series of five canvas panels that included painted images, family photographs, newspaper clippings, and references to popular European-American culture such Barbie, Casper the Friendly Ghost, and prizes from boxes of Cracker Jacks. The rectangular panels, hung in a vertically descending column, allowed the viewer a glimpse into Carrasco's childhood, while simultaneously alluding to the cracker-box or prison-like architecture of many housing projects.

Born in El Paso, Texas, Carrasco grew up in the Mar Vista Gardens Housing Projects in Culver City, California. Although her father was a Korean war veteran and

worked as a bus driver for the Santa Monica Bus Lines, the family was "very financially handicapped" and received food stamps.[64] The artist refers to the ridicule she received as a child in the second vertical panel of her codex. She depicts a brown paper grocery bag, tipped on its side with an assortment of grocery products spilling out, including a box of Carnation Instant Milk, a can of Spam, a jar of Tang, and a bottle of Clorox bleach. Carrasco overlays the paper bag with the repeated image of what looks like cockroaches in a shade of brown just slightly darker than the grocery sack. The images refer to an incident that Carrasco experienced at Catholic school when the nuns made her recite what she had for breakfast in front of the class, which was "a glass of Kool-Aid" and "one scrambled egg."[65] The students' subsequent cruel laughter and the prejudice against the poor demonstrated by the nuns' behavior "surprised" Carrasco.[66] In the codex, the artist's use of these products indicates the substitution of the cheaper and less nutritionally viable products that poverty often requires. The bottle Clorox points out "bleaching" or "whitening" process that Chicanas/os and other peoples of color are subjected to by the dominant European-American culture whose values often negate or render invisible points of view from

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[64] Jeffrey J. Rangel, Interview with Barbara Carrasco, Los Angeles, California, April 13, 1999, (Smithsonian, Archives of American Art); http://archivesofamericanart.si.edu/oralhist/carras99.htm.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.

other cultures.[67]

The third panel represents Carrasco's Catholic upbringing and demonstrates the spiritual wealth of her household despite its material poverty. She fills the entire panel with the stark wooden surface of what may be a home altar, a bookshelf, or the top of a dresser. On this visual plane, the artist depicts a crucifix, a holy candle, and a card with an image of a man in left profile, his hands clasped in prayer in front of his face. On the crucifix, Christ's starkly white body creates a sharp contrast with the black rosary that hangs over His three-dimensional form. Directly to the right of the crucifix and in the center of the panel, the candle hosts a color picture of saint or priest figure with a mother and child. On the far right, the image of the praying man that somewhat resembles César Chávez or John F. Kennedy emerges in fine white lines against a dark periwinkle background. Home altars often serve as the didactic site in Mexican Catholic homes for the transference of spiritual and cultural practices, where parents (most often mothers) lead the recitation of the rosary and other daily prayers. Altars from this era might include pictures of well-known figures or icons of the day, especially Catholics such as Chávez and Kennedy that would be held up as the children's behavioral models.

In addition to her spiritual milieu, Carrasco includes other references to the

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[67] In his exhibition catalog essay, Sanchez-Tranquilino refers this process as "Americanization." See Sanchez-Tranquilino, "Feathered Reflections," 18.

larger political and social climate of her youth in the fourth and fifth panels of *Codex Carrasco.* In the fourth panel, the artist depicts a young girl and boy watching television (a new phenomenon in the late 50s and early 60s). On the television screen, the artist painted the cartoon characters Wilma Flintstone and Casper the Friendly Ghost reacting nervously to the presence of a mushroom cloud in an otherwise beautiful blue sky. Along with the impact of the Cold War, the artist records President Kennedy's interest in physical fitness in the fifth and final panel of her codex.[68] Carrasco placed a "Presidential Physical Fitness Award" badge in this panel along with a bright yellow and fluorescent pink image of "flower power," assorted family photographs, and a newspaper clipping touting two people's rescue by a neighbor from a local fire. Carrasco, like Delilah Montoya, drew on familial and personal histories to shape her codex. While Carrasco's central objective was to record her experiences growing up in public housing, the artwork almost incidentally reflected her family's daily cultural practices and use of a home altar. The concern with the sacred emerged in *Projex* as it does in *Codex Delilah* because of the narrative aspect of the codex.

Celebrated Bay Area muralist and printmaker Emmanuel Catarino Montoya

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[68] In the interview with Jeffrey J. Rangel, Carrasco spoke of her fourth grade teacher, Sister Mary Ann, who fostered her interest in art by giving her art books to read and encouraging her to draw. Together, they made a scrapbook on John F. Kennedy, so Carrasco was aware of Kennedy's importance to American Catholics and the country at large. Rangel, Interview with Barbara Carrasco, Los Angeles, California, April 13, 1999.

used the circle as sacred symbol to shape his construction of personal identity and the exploration of the oral transmission of knowledge (Fig. 1.8). Montoya first conceived the subtitle "Reclaiming My Brownness and My Redness" and, although he eventually abandoned this secondary tag, it explained what the artist sought to portray in the work.[69] Because he is of Apache as well as Mexican descent, Montoya combined allusions to indigenous cultures both north and south of the *Río Bravo.*[70] Referring to his Native North American ethnicity, Montoya stated, "It won't be something I will hide, like my relatives did."[71] Over three feet in diameter, the mixed media work resembles a shield, similar to those held by Jaguar and Eagle warriors in Central Mexican codices and also those of Native North Americas. Additionally, the form may refer to the Mexica/Aztec Calendar and to the Mesoamerican cyclical concept of time.

The artist indicated the two aspects of his ethnic identity by the treatment he applied around the perimeter of the shield. He visually split the exterior into two separate sections and attached small jewelry findings in regular increments. On the left half, he ornamented the circular form with small ceramic beads to suggest Mexican

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[69] I have taken this information from Emmanuel Catarino Montoya's artist proposal in the unpaginated *Exhibition Sourcebook.* Information courtesy of the archives of Holly Barnet-Sanchez and permission for the use of this material was granted by Marcos Sanchez-Tranquilino.

[70] Although Montoya did not illustrate this important dividing line between Mexico and the United States in his codex, he stated in his artist proposal that he wanted his work to "span both sides of El Río Bravo." *Exhibition Sourcebook, c*ourtesy archives of Holly Barnet-Sanchez.

[71] Susan Ferris, "S.F. exhibit explores mestizo heritage," *San Francisco Examiner*, October 12, 1992, A-2.

heritage, while on the right side he attached tiny tin cones to suggest Native North American descent. Additionally, in the upper right section of the canvas, Montoya painted a figure walking up a red path, their steps superimposing black footprints on its surface. Whether this image refers to the Native North American expression "Walking the Red Road" is unclear. At the end of the road, the Alamo burns a bright red and, just off to the right of the path, the artist depicts a conquistador in the act of murdering a group of indigenous people. Therefore, the artist may be using red to symbolize blood, death, and destruction rather than indigenous identity. Perhaps most importantly, in the center of the shield Montoya quoted the tri-partite head comprised of a Spaniard, an Indian, and a Mestizo[72] and placed his reworked version directly above the sharp spikes of a maguey plant. In Montoya's adaptation, he used Prismacolor (colored pencil) to draw a mask of *Tonatiuh*, the Postclassic Central Mexican sun god, and complemented either side with self-portraits in right and left profile.

Below these central figures, two large hands shelter a smaller depiction of Montoya in an image that implies nurturance or birth. Montoya's torso appears unclothed in back view, with his long black hair cascading over his shoulders. The

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[72] Early examples of the use of this image by Chicanas/os are *Mestizo Banner*, a silkscreen from 1967 by Emanuel Martínez and *Mestizo*, a silkscreen by Armado Peña, Jr. from 1974. Both of these images can be found in the "Cultural Icons" section of Richard Griswold del Castillo, Teresa McKenna, and Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano, eds., *Chicano Art: Resistance and Affirmation, 1965-1985* (Los Angeles: Wight Art Gallery, University of California, Los Angeles, 1991), 238-255.

artist turns his head to the left, throws his head back, and small black footprints emerge from his slightly open mouth. The footprints replicate the Mesoamerican motif for movement and arc in two curving paths to the left and right sides of the canvas, again implicating both aspects of the artist's racial mixture. The footprints trace a journey, not unlike Six-Deer's, and blend contemporary settings with ancient scenes and Mesoamerican symbols such as feathered serpents.

Balanced on either side of the canvas, Montoya illustrated seated groups of people with a female figure. Just below the group on the left, the female figure appears again. However, this time, she sits on the ground with a solitary male figure, most likely the artist. In every grouping, mouths emit multiple "speech scrolls," the symbol found in Mesoamerican codices that indicates speech or communication. The woman is the largest figure in each instance, suggesting age or importance, and the conversation groups imply the transmission of cultural knowledge or family stories. Montoya emphasizes his ancestors by including family pictures on the right immediately above the speaking female figure. In the group vignette on the right and the scene where the woman converses with the boy alone on the left, the woman's body overlaps a partial portrayal of a contemporary one-story white house with green shutters. Although Montoya clothes these figure in Central Mexican costumes, the connection with the house links the characters with the present. Further, the artist's use of this costume may imply wisdom and connection with the past, rather than

indicating that the depicted events took place in the ancient past. I find Montoya's codex noteworthy because he portrayed a woman as the central figure of importance in a work by a male artist. Accordingly, of all the works in the exhibit the two Montoyas, Delilah and Emmanuel, share the premise of a female figure or figures as the most important character and site of oral transmission of knowledge and culture.

Wayne Alaniz Healy (b. 1946) and David Rivas Botello (b. 1946) formed the art duo East Los Streetscapers in 1975 and began a series of public art projects that continues today.[73] Best known for their mural work in Los Angeles, for "The Chicano Codices" exhibit Healy and Botello used a form relatively new to them at the time, a mural of glazed ceramic tiles designed to lay on a flat surface. For the work *Codex East Los Streetscapers: East Los Lotería con El Eclipso de la Indígena (East Los Lottery with the Indigenous Eclipse)*, they took their neighborhood of East Los Angeles and the Mexican game of lotería as sources of inspiration. While acknowledging an "indigenous eclipse," the artists created an "East Los" vernacular, a language of images that celebrated the events, culture, and important people associated with their thriving Chicana/o neighborhood of East Los Angeles. At each corner of the work, Healy and Botello indicated the four central pillars of their world: "*El Jale* (The

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[73] For more information of the mural production of East Los Streetscapers, please see Marcos Sanchez-Tranquilino, "Murales del Movimiento: Chicano Murals and the Discourses of Art and Americanization," in *Signs from the Heart: California Chicano Murals*, ed. Eva Sperling Cockcroft and Holly Barnet-Sanchez (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press and SPARC, 1999).

Workplace/Job)," "*La Familia* (The Family)," "*La Educación* (Education)," and, notably, *La Iglesia* (The Church)," an inclusion that positioned the church and spirituality as a central aspect of Chicana/o life.

In contrast to Healy and Botello's joyous celebration of urban Chicana/o life, Willie F. Herron (b. 1951) took a more somber view in his *Codex Herrón III, La Culata: Patrimony and Consequence*. Founding member of ASCO,[74] a Chicano conceptual art group, Herrón's codex grappled with one of Sanchez-Tranquilino's suggested categories, "Patrimony and Consequence." The artist depicted a series of vignettes that wove personal experiences with accounts of various indignities and violent encounters suffered by Chicanas/os. Herrón used bleach as an excruciating visual metaphor to graphically represent the physical, mental, and spiritual cost of assimilation. In Herrón's work, a man is forced to hold five gallons of bleach above his head while kneeing on a mound of roughly textured gravel. The tremendous weight and intense power of "bleach" as whitening agent exemplified the pressure to assimilate that Chicanas and Chicanos endure from the dominant culture.

While Herrón portrayed the cost of assimilation and prejudice on a broader level, Manuel "Spain" Rodríguez (b. 1940) adopted the comic book form to

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[74] Other founding members of ASCO include Harry Gamboa, Jr., Gronk, Humberto Sandoval, and Patssi Valdez. For more information on this important art group, please see Harry Jr. Gamboa, *Urban Exile: Collected Writings of Harry Gamboa, Jr.* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998).

interrogate his relationship with his Spanish and Italian ancestry and to portray the attitudes he encountered growing up regarding Spanish and Mexican heritage. In *Codex "Spain": Mexico and Me,* Rodríguez composed the work in the blocky horizontal registers familiar to comic book fans and used exquisitely precise lines to present realistically rendered characters. In four separate panels, the artist used India ink to record key moments during his life, including his influential encounter with Diego Rivera's painting in art school, his first trip to Mexico in the mid-80s, and his Italian mother's disdain for "things Latino."

Unlike Rodríguez's personally based account, Marta Sánchez (b. 1959) recounted significant events in the history of the Americas and parallel events in the history of Europe in a densely illustrated work entitled *Codex Sánchez: Feast of Toxcatl*. She painted a descending cross-cultural comparative timeline in red block letters over her visual depiction of a disorderly landscape replete with bodies, buildings, and skulls. The artist used the black and white outline of a Conquistador's metal helmet to frame her visual history recitation. Sánchez included the word "Toxcatl" in her subtitle to refer to a particular moment in the Mexica/Aztec calendar observed with various ritual practices including feasting. She also intended the reference to emphasize that the initial armed struggles between the Mexica and Hernán Cortés's armies began during the celebration of Toxcatl in 1521.

Rubén Trejo (b. 1937) continued Sánchez's acknowledgment of indigenous

life in his work, *Codex Trejo: Tarascans in Minnesota* while documenting his indigenous heritage and the circumstances of his early life. Trejo's parents were Tarascan Indians from the Mexican state of Michoacán and came to the United States as migrant farmworkers. With his family, Trejo made his home among the rail yards of St. Paul, Minnesota, and lived in boxcars until age nineteen. As we have seen in *Codex for the 21st Century* (1997), he often uses rail spikes in his work. For the 1992 exhibit, Trejo explored the notions of history and language on a large white wooden plywood panel that he covered with a multitude of black symbols, resembling glyphs. In the center, a masked face in right profile "speaks." Trejo represents the sounds of speech with a curving black wave or snake-like form that flowed outward from the person's mouth and the thick undulating line arched around the exterior of the wooden panel, encircling most of the painting.

"The Chicano Codices": Installations

I consider the second group of works as installations because they consist of complex multi-format pieces with wall-mounted elements. Gronk, Celia Álvarez Muñoz, and Marcos Raya produced three very different works that combined sculpture, found objects, and three-dimensional forms with two-dimensional elements such as paintings or wall text. *Codex Gronk* work was one of the least easily understood artworks in the exhibit. Gronk (b. 1954 as Glugio Gronk Nicandro) formed the work with two twenty-four inch square pieces of wall-mounted wood, a solitary

black wooden shelf, and three clear plastic boxes, containing various objects, that sat on the shelf's stark surface. Gronk labeled each of the plastic boxes with a numbered red tag suggesting stored items held in a lost-and-found. Attached to the wall a few inches apart, the black wooden panels resembled a chalkboard. The artist scrawled various words and images on these surfaces including a coffee cup, images from the lotería, numbers, equations, and unrelated words such as "CHAOS," "MIL," and "LIMITS." The equations and other seemingly randomly scratched elements suggested attempts at deciphering a secret message or hidden knowledge. A small yellow triangle with a brief notation held court in the upper left-hand corner. Sanchez-Tranquilino referred to this figure as Simon of the Desert and explained that Gronk fashioned this character after Mexican/Spanish filmmaker Luis Buñuel's *Simon del Desierto* (1965).[75] Without Sanchez-Tranquilino's explanatory remarks that told us this figure intended to set himself on fire to see and know God, most viewers would remain perplexed when viewing this artwork.

Celia Álvarez Muñoz (b. 1937) invented an Aztec God named Petrocoatl as a means to comment on contemporary society's overuse of natural resources, especially oil. In *Codex Muñoz: Petrocoatl, Aztec God del Fin del Mundo,* Muñoz recounted how Petrocoatl escaped from the pages of the original codices as they burned and that he

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[75] Sanchez-Tranquilino, "Feathered Reflections," 4.

serves as a prophet to foretell the end of the world caused by our abuses of the environment. The central feature of Muñoz's sculpture resembled a gas mask ornamented with strings of beads and a multitude of brightly colored feathers. Two photographs that authenticated or documented Petrocoatl's existence were attached to the wall, along with a written narrative describing Petrocoatl and his mission.

Like Muñoz, Marcos Raya (b. 1948) wanted to draw attention to the precariousness of nature and the contemporary threat that human society poses to the earth. In *Codex Raya: Xipe II: The Enigma of the Mask*, he produced a multi-faceted work that explored the theme of transformation and used the mask as its central symbolic element. The work consisted of a centrally placed medium-scale canvas, an altar, two *cajitas* (small boxes), and a smaller ornately framed painting. Raya revised the traditional portrayal of *Xipe Totec*, the Central Mexican male god of fertility and renewal, when he transposed the god's gender by painting a contemporary Chicana in the role of the masculine force of nature. Raya combined references to ancient Mesoamerican cosmology with Mexican popular culture by including masks from *La Lucha Libre* (Mexican wrestling). The references to masking repeated throughout the work suggested a concern with ritual and spirituality.

"The Chicano Codices": Screenfold Inspired Works

The third group of works in this group directly adopted or most closely referred to the Mesoamerican screenfold form. Codices by Raoul de la Sota, Carmen

Lomas Garza, Amalia Mesa Bains, Delilah Montoya, and Kathy Vargas make up this section. Because I discuss *Codex Delilah* throughout this study, provide a detailed formal analysis of the work in the following chapter, and explain how it satisfies the screenfold format, I will not cover *Codex Delilah* in this section.

Raoul de la Sota's work, *Codex Delasota: Pages from the Family Scrapbook*, adopted the image of fire and combustion as a central theme. De la Sota (b. 1936) shaped a five-foot length of canvas into a multi-paneled screenfold form with burned and torn edges that suggested its timely retrieval from the conquistador's fires. Six knife blades that suggest violence, destruction, and flames projected through an image of a Central Mexican temple on the second panel. De la Sota referred to the work as a "genealogical map"[76] that traced his family history while also incorporating the conquest and its aftermath. The artist used a repeating image of *calaveras* (skulls) on the initial panel to indicate the impact of the Conquest. On other panels, he collaged family portraits, newspaper clippings, correspondence, and bits of cloth and paper. In De la Sota's family scrapbook, the artist placed small three-dimensional objects that perforated various panels. At the bottom right of the third panel, the artist attached a small white skeleton that reinforced the reference to long-dead family members. A small white three-dimensional figure "flew" outward at a ninety-degree angle to the

[76] I took this reference from De la Sota's initial artist's proposal, information courtesy of the archives of Holly Barnet-Sanchez.

fifth panel. This whimsical human figure appeared in sharp contrast to the previous scenes of death and destruction. De la Sota attached two tiny golden balls to its back with short pieces of wire and these forms radiated above its shoulders like antennae or "wings." Perhaps, like Juan Soldado, the patron folk saint of migrants, this tiny angel offered protection for the journey north taken by De la Sota's and many other families.

In a similar recognition of family, Carmen Lomas Garza (b. 1948) created an eight-page screenfold codex that incorporated *papel picado* (perforated or punched paper), a Mexican form of paper art (Fig. 1.9). Inside *Codex Lomas Garza: Pedacito de mi Corazón (Pieces of My Heart)*, Lomas Garza included four panels with papel picado images, three with painted images, and one with handwritten text. The painted images recorded indigenous traditions and medicinal knowledge because they illustrated the everyday uses of plants for food and healing. In one panel, Carmen's mother placed a piece of aloe vera, a common home remedy for burns and abrasions, on Carmen's brother Arturo's arm. In another panel, a pair of hands carefully removed a section of *nopal* (cactus) from a larger flowering and *tuna*-fruited plant.[77] These parts of the cactus provide critical sources of moisture and nourishment. The four panels of papel picado celebrated the landscape of South Texas where Lomas Garza grew up and depicted its flora and fauna. A chameleon rested invisibly on a leafy tree

[77] *Tunas* are the edible reddish-purple fruit produced by the cactus after it flowers.

branch, a hummingbird pierced the delicate blossom of a cactus flower and drinks deeply, a horney toad blended into the desert floor and hid among the spiny leaves of a maguey, and marigolds reach toward the sun. Lomas Garza referred to the red and black ink of the ancient scribes when she threaded thin pieces of red and black ribbon through the front and back covers of the codex to conceptually "bind" the codex after reading. Additionally, the elements from the natural world Lomas Garza presents - chameleon, hummingbird, and marigold have associations with Mesoamerican understandings of transformation, sacrifice, and death.

Noted *altar* maker Amalia Mesa Bains created *Codex Amalia: Venus Envy* from mixed media including paper, cloth, photographs, flower petals, fragments of correspondence, and other materials. She drew upon previous altars that constructed ancestries or lineages of women significant to her, such as Dolores Del Río and female family members as the springboard for the work.[78] The themes of memory, spirituality, the body, and femininity explored in these earlier altars also appeared in *Codex Amalia* as well as her formal concerns and experimentation with random process. Mesa-Bains reworked the material and concepts from these earlier altars for *Codex Amalia* and represented them in the codex with cutout pictures, transferred images, and bits of paper and cloth. Each altar the artist cited corresponded to a

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[78] Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, *Grotto of the Virgins* (New York: INTAR, 1987).

particular lesson or piece of wisdom passed from one woman to another. Taken as a whole, the artist wanted the work to refer or replicate instructional guidebooks for young girls. Mesa-Bains placed her "instructions" in various texts throughout the work. Many of the handwritten texts were partial and intentionally faded suggesting the potential loss of history, family records, and memories. Additionally, Mesa-Bains arranged a frame of rose petals, reminiscent of long preserved mementos, around the codex. This scattering of material with a quickly evaporating fragrance lent an impermanent quality to the piece and associated the artwork with ceremony and the ritual transference of knowledge. Although visually very different, *Codex Amalia* and *Codex Delilah* share the concerns of recovery and reconstruction of history drawn from community and personal sources, the use of female icons, spirituality, the female body, and ritual practices.

In *Codex Not-Vargas*: *The Forgotten Name Codex,* Kathy Vargas (b. 1950) emphasized history and genealogy and mimicked the pre-Conquest double-sided, screenfold format with three transparent Plexiglas panels jointed along the edges of the inner pages. The artist encased six photographs printed back-to-back in the see-thru plastic. Under each image, she inscribed handwritten text that flowed from one panel to another, rather than an individual narration pertaining to each photograph alone as in *Codex Delilah.* Vargas ventured beyond these tangible appropriations of Mesoamerican books to express the character and essence of the originals. She

reflected the spirit and function of the Mixtec Codices when she used the form to commemorate her relationship with her recently deceased father[79] and as a vehicle to remember, reclaim, and reconstruct a lineage of her ancestors disrupted by the Conquest. Due to the frequently forced conversion of indigenous peoples after the Conquest, newly made Christians received baptismal names that supplanted their birth names. In the panel that gives the codex its title, Vargas documented the disappearance of these names and poignantly presented her father's viewpoint,

> Once, an uncle by marriage proudly presented my father with a coat of arms which he'd brought from Spain, saying, "Here is the Vargas coat of arms, your family crest." My father answered "that is not mine. My name is not Vargas. We were called Vargas because we worked at the *hacienda de Vargas* and we were the *peones de Vargas*. My real name is an indigenous name – lost now.[80]

In the work, Vargas created a litany of loss: a lost father, lost familial faces, lost indigenous names, lost ancestral heritage. These references created a through-line from past to present and represented the connection between her father and herself. In another panel, she extended her personal loss through time by connecting the loss of

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[79] Vargas revealed her enduring connection with her father, Ambrosio Vargas, in an interview with *Denver Post* reporter Richard Johnson. She recounted that a dream had sparked the genesis of *Codex Not-Vargas*. In the dream, Kathy's father, who had died a year and a half earlier, appeared to Kathy and told her how to create the work. Richard Johnson, "Chicano Images Live On: 'Codex' Exhibit at Golden's Foothills Art Center," *The Denver Post,* January 20, 1993.

[80] Vargas wrote this text on the second panel of her codex. The McNay Museum in San Antonio, Texas, exhibited *Codex Not-Vargas*: *The Forgotten Name Codex* as part of their 2000-2001 retrospective of Vargas's work. Please see *Kathy Vargas: Photographs, 1971-2000, A Retrospective*, (San Antonio: The Marion Koogler McNay Art Museum, 2000).

life during the conquest with the *desaporecidos* (disappeared) in Guatemala, wondering what would have happened to her family if, instead of coming North to America, the family had migrated to Guatemala. In this way, Vargas fundamentally linked herself and her family with all indigenous peoples.

In the final section of text, the artist stated that her father always wanted pictures to record their presence in the world and to prove that the family had survived. Her codex and her work continued this legacy by making visible the story of the not-Vargas family. In the text, Vargas spoke of "continue[ing] the tradition" that her father initiated by documenting history through family pictures "so that our presence would not be lost like the original names of our family." Referring to her codex as a "family album," the artist emulated Mesoamerica codex makers or scribes when she recorded that she and her father "have been scribes with cameras." While *Codex Not-Vargas* recorded the loss of one family's name, it stands for countless other families whose lives have been touched by the conquest and whose names, images, and histories have also vanished. Like *Codex Delilah*, in Vargas's work an individual family history stands for many peoples' histories.

"The Chicano Codices": Nichos and Cajitas

The fourth group of works from "The Chicano Codices" exhibit used the small format box as the primary formal means to compose their works. These small boxes refer to containers of varying sizes that house relics of saints. While not all of the

artworks I include in this group address spiritual issues, I maintain that the use of this material form implicates the cultural awareness of its association with sacred and spiritual power. Alfred J. Quiroz, Patricia Rodríguez, and Lawrence M. Yañez used the caja form to create a group of works with a similar form but very different content.

In a visual paean to Pachuco culture, Alfred J. Quiroz (b. 1944) created a series of six small boxes that celebrated Pachuco/a culture from a male point of view.[81] Pachucas/os were young women and men who defined an urban, cool style in the 1940s.[82] In sharp contrast to war-time America, the men dressed in "zoot suits" or wide-legged pants that narrowed to an extremely tight cuff, knee-length suit jackets with heavily padded shoulders, and a long chain attached at the waist that hung down the front of the entire outfit.[83] Women wore tight skirts with "big" hair and stylized makeup. In one of the boxes recalling the Zoot Suit Riots, the artist recorded the disfavor that Pachucos often encountered when he illustrated two service men physically attacking a Chicano and forcibly cutting his hair. In similar fashion, each of

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[81] For recent analysis of the Pachuco's female counterpart, please see Catherine Sue Ramírez, "The Pachuca in Chicana/o Art, Literature and History: Reexamining Nation, Cultural Nationalism and Resistance" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2000).

[82] For information on the Pachuco, see Marcos Sanchez-Tranquilino and John Tagg, "The Pachuco's Flayed Hide: The Museum, Identity, and Buenas Garras," in *Chicano Art: Resistance and Affirmation, 1965-1985*, ed. Richard Griswold del Castillo, Teresa McKenna, and Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano (Los Angeles: Wight Gallery, University of California, Los Angeles, 1991), 97-108.

[83] The contemporary musical group Los García Brothers dress Pachuco style. Edward James Olmos created the quintessential Pachuco in Luis Valdez's *Zoot Suit,* a play that traveled from Los Angeles to Broadway and was later made into a film. The play depicted the Zoot Suit Riots, a conflict of several days' duration that occurred in June of 1943 when a group of sailors attacked a group of Pachucos in Los Angeles.

the six boxes memorialized or enshrined a different aspect of the Pachuca/o life from hairstyle and clothing to social customs. Quiroz's work presented a brief glimpse of an historically-specific period from a male point of view, although his voluptuous Pachucas and sleek Pachucos defined a sensual and body-conscious style rather than a spiritual mode.

In *Codex Rayos: Relampagos*, Patricia Rodríguez (b. 1944) used the nicho form to explore spiritual rather than physical concerns. Rodríguez, Graciela Carrillo, Consuelo Méndez, and Irene Pérez founded *Las Mujeres Muralistas* (The Women Muralists) in 1972 and the women painted a series of murals throughout San Francisco in alleys, parks, and other public spaces.[84] After her involvement with Las Muralistas ended, the artist began developing small-scale ceremonial boxes. These cajas or boxes, like *Codex Delilah*, combined memory and reclamation as central themes. In her work for the 1992 show, Patricia Rodríguez used the word "relampagos" or lightning strikes to characterize her presentation of the competing spiritual practices and worldviews that began to merge after the Conquest (Fig. 1.10). She created three interrelated small-scale shrines that used Christian symbols to indicate the loss and retrieval of

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[84] For an overview of the mural movement, see Eva Sperling Cockcroft, John Pitman Weber, and James Cockcroft, *Toward a People's Art: The Contemporary Mural Movement* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988). For information on the Muralistas' work in San Francisco, see Timothy W. Drescher, *San Francisco Murals: Community Creates Its Muse, 1904-1997* (St. Paul: Pogo Press, Incorporated, 1991). For recent scholarship on this group and other mural collectives, see María Ochoa, *Creative Collectives: Chicana Painters Working in Community* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003).

indigenous knowledge. The artist framed the shrine on the far left with the tongues of fire from the Sacred Heart of Jesus and inserted a small, now indestructible, punched tin form entitled "Chicano Codices" inside. In the final piece, the artist placed several small glass vials within a tin frame that resembled reliquaries, small boxes or devices that contain remains of saints, Christ, or other holy figures. Like Montoya's work, Rodríguez incorporated the box and book forms as parallel containers of sacred knowledge and information.

Laurence M. Yañez (b. 1949) used a Japanese samurai alter ego to represent himself in *Codex Yañez: Xata Nalga Xolo Xuxu.* The work consisted of five delicately painted boxes arranged in a screenfold pattern, mounted on wheels, and linked together with lengths of chain to suggest a train. Yañez used "Xuxu" in the title to indicate the sound of a child's word for train, "choo-choo." The individual boxes represented aspects of personal and collective history that could be uncoupled from their original placement, then reconnected in a different arrangement to form alternate stories.[85] The malleability of time evoked by Yañez echoes Montoya's treatment in *Codex Delilah*. Yañez, like Mesa-Bains, stressed the fleeting beauty of life when he juxtaposed two kabuki portraits, representing his samurai alter ego, over the image of a fully open pink rose.

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[85] Sanchez-Tranquilino, "Feathered Reflections," 9.

"The Chicano Codices": Large Sculptural Works

Works by Michael M. Amescua, Charles "Chaz" Bojórquez, Carlos Frésquez, Harry Gamboa, Jr., Emmanuel Martínez, Victor Ochoa, and Celia Herrera Rodríguez constitute the large sculptural pieces. Michael M. Amescua's *Codex Amescua: Perseverance of the Chicano Spirit* consisted of a steel and ceramic cylinder with cutout forms of animals, humans, and shapes that portrayed earth, water, and air. Painted crimson, the work reflected the interconnection between humanity and the environment. Visually and through the subtitle, the artist directly linked the survival of Chicanas/os to the natural cycles of life and the porous quality and delicate shapes of *Codex Amescua* indicated the intricate web that binds sentient beings with the natural world.

At sixty-nine inches high, Chaz Bojórquez's *Codex Bojórquez: Año Loco XIV92 por Dios y Oro* (Crazy Year 1492 of God and Gold) constituted one of the largest works created for the exhibit. Bojórquez (b. 1949) carved a totemic amalgam of *barrio* (Chicano neighborhood) and Mesoamerican references in a contemporary stele. He layered Teotihuacán-style feathered serpents[86] with claws borrowed from *Coyolxauhqui's* (a Mexica/Aztec earth goddess) serpent skirt and marked the sculpture

[86] Teotihuacán, or "place of the gods," is a Mesoamerican site north and east of today's Mexico City. According to Central Mexican creation stories, the gods were born at Teotihuacán. Feathered serpents appear in various forms and materials throughout Mesoamerica including stone, painted murals, and as part of architectural embellishments on temples.

with a series of *placas* (graffiti tags), including the names of European conquerors Christopher Columbus and Hernán Cortés as well as the codex's subtitle. The various placas covered two thirds of the sculpture's face, although the beauty of the detailed carving, like the culture and history it represents, remain vibrant and powerful underneath.

Carlos Frésquez (b. 1959) used a Christian symbol, a cross, as his formal means to portray the subjugation of indigenous spirituality and worldview by European Catholicism in *Codex Frésquez: Imagine there's nothing to live or die for; no religions too…*(Fig. 1.11). To fabricate the work, Frésquez vertically stacked five wooden panels and attached a single corresponding panel horizontally on either side of the central column. He intended his piece to be interactive because he designed the cross's two side panels to unfold and reveal additional sections. Each portion of the painted cross contained various scenes. At the lowest tier, a white skull lay beneath assorted multi-colored jungle and desert vegetation and represented "death, the past, [and] the end of life."[87] Above the skull, Frésquez intertwined a yellow and black spotted ocelot amidst green and blue flora, understood as "Jaguarman," part human, part animal, that symbolized pre-Conquest peoples and indicated their spiritual relationship with the earth. In the center of the cross, the artist painted a multi-domed

[87] I take his information from an addendum to the artist's initial proposal submitted to Marcos Sanchez-Tranquilino, used by permission and courtesy of the archives of Holly Barnet-Sanchez.

cathedral-like structure with the shimmering lights of the night sky and a brilliant white crescent moon rising supreme at the top of the panel. Underneath and slightly to the left of the moon, the artist juxtaposed a pained pink heart against the night sky's midnight blue ground. The anatomically rendered heart wept three tear-like drops of pink blood and probably referred to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, sacrificial blood offered in Mesoamerican ritual practices, and tears of grief shed as a result of the conflict between European and Mesoamerican religion. To emphasize this conflict, Frésquez's subtitle quoted the lyrics of John Lennon's "Imagine," a move that illustrated Chicana/o art's use of popular vernacular. On both of the unfolding side panels, the artist repeated the Jaguarman image with the burning of the codices on the left and a pre-Columbian pyramid on the right. The pyramid appeared symbolically underneath the Catholic cathedral and the burning codices represented the beginning of the degradation and destruction of indigenous life.

Harry Gamboa, Jr. (b. 1951), like Frésquez, used the cross form to visualize the results of European contact. In a formal move that incorporated found or everyday objects, Gamboa used a wooden chair and three rectangular box-like shapes to create his codex, a tombstone or grave marker entitled *Codex Gamboa: The Singe Element*. The tombstone, constructed from the three boxes roughly in the shape of a cross, balanced precariously on the seat of a chair. Known for his conceptual art work, Gamboa painted significant texts on the chair, including "NO HISTORY,"

"VIOLENCE," "MEMORY," "FORGOTTEN," and the paradoxical statement, "BLIND EYES SAW IT COME." Like a poem, the words descended one after another in a vertical column. At the top of the tombstone, the artist painted human forms that crouched against a gray stone wall. Gamboa rendered both forms in red paint with few distinguishing features, but the viewer recognized these forms as representative humans rather than individual people. The figures gazed directly at the viewer, but Gamboa white-washed" their mouths with strategically placed white rectangles and rendered them speechless. Gamboa's tombstone marked the Conquest's toll and recorded its legacy -- the colonialism and racism that contemporary Chicanas/os struggle against in order to "speak" and articulate their own destiny.

In *Codex Emanuel, The Quincentenary: In Light of Quinto Sol*, Emanuel Martínez (b. 1947) created a multi-format work that included a wooden base with a cylinder, reminiscent of a rolling pin, containing a painted canvas scroll. As the viewer moved the cylinder backward, a painted acrylic canvas unrolled to disclose a sequentially ordered historical images recognizing and connecting artistic traditions of Mesoamerica with contemporary expressions. In the center of the work, a series of dead and dying indigenous people laid under the armor-clad legs of a Conquistador whose outstretched arms held a sword in one hand and a cross in the other. A feathered serpent rose above the Conquistador's head in a figure eight pattern and encircled a tripartite Mestiza/o head that consisted of a Spaniard, an indigenous

person, and their product, a Mestiza/o. Above the tri-part head, a woman, clothed in a gown of rainbows, stood with arms out-stretched repeating the Conquistador's pose. In sharp contrast, she held a paintbrush in one hand and a multi-hued paint palette in the other.

Similar to Martínez's format, Victor Ochoa (b. 1948) also fabricated a painted wooden podium that held a compendium of knowledge, a Chicano dictionary. Entitled *Codex Ochoa: Chicanosauras 500 and Chicano Dictionary 500 Year Edition,* the artist used an encyclopedic format to organize and create alphabetically arranged entries from A to Z (Aztlán to Zapata) in a binder format. The dictionary contained images and texts that defined Spanish words and provided Chicana/o and Pocha/o interpretations.

Celia Herrera Rodríguez's work, *Codex Zelia: Las Hijas de la Xingada Madre* (Daughters of a Raped Mother) referenced the screenfold form of Mesoamerican codices on a much larger scale than most exhibition codices when the artist used a hinged three-panel screen for her codex. Inside the screen's wooden frame, she painted watercolor images on paper panels that recorded the story of the daughters of the conquest and their path toward healing. On the left screen, Rodríguez (b. 1947) implicated the story of La Llorona with the image of a woman crying out in pain and suggested the physical suffering of women during the conquest with a disembodied heart and hand. This is reminiscent of the second panel of *Codex Delilah,* where

Conquistadors severed body parts from those they conquered, not only to cause their deaths but also as a means of subjugation. The second panel of *Codex Zelia* depicted the daily act of grinding corn and preparing tortillas, a culinary and cultural ritual performed by women throughout the centuries. Easily dismissed as a routine task that meets the needs of the physical body, in a larger sense this image portrayed women in their roles as nurturers and sustainers of human life connected with the bounty of the earth. The portrayal also connected contemporary daughters of the conquest with their *antepasadas* (female ancestors) through the performance of this ritual and, like rituals indicated in *Codex Delilah*, suggested the recovery and preservation of indigenous traditions. The final panel demonstrated that the continual healing process necessary for contemporary Chicanas to come to terms with their identity and histories required a fully healed heart and mandated an awareness of and connection with the past.

Contemporary Artists Books

As part of an in-depth examination of *Codex Delilah*, it is important to position the work within the contexts of Montoya's overall art production, Chicana/o art, other works from "The Chicano Codices," and the larger genre of artists books and book-like art produced by artists. For the purposes of establishing these contexts, I briefly outline some of the major considerations regarding this art genre as discussed in art historical discourse during the past several decades. In 1973, Diane Perry Vanderlip curated an exhibition for the Moore College of Art in Philadelphia and coined the term

"artists books" to name the exhibition and used the newly minted moniker to describe the more than two hundred-fifty objects she displayed. This exhibition initiated a vast wave of production, exhibition, and criticism of artworks that engaged with the book format. The origin and definition of artists books have been hotly debated among art historians ever since.

Most scholars consider the *livre d'artiste* or the artist's book as an antecedent to these contemporary artworks. During the late 1800s, the increasing use of mechanical processes in the printing industry resulted in the deterioration of the quality of book production. In response, established French artists created original prints, generally etchings and lithographs, to decorate or illustrate existing texts. Paired with poetry or short essays, these books were rather lavish affairs that involved close collaboration between the artist, writer, publisher, and printer.[88] Publishers issued these books in limited editions and they shared similar characteristics with the previous development of *éditions de luxe* (deluxe editions) such as special bindings, large-scale format, unusual papers, and labor-intensive hand processes.[89] However, the addition of artwork produced by top-ranking artists and texts written by leading authors created a new and unique niche in the offerings of fine art publishing houses.

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[88] Donna Stein, "When a Book is More than a Book," in *Artists' Books in the Modern Era 1870-2000* (San Francisco: Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, 2001), 17.
[89] Johanna Drucker, *The Century of Artists' Books* (New York: Granary Books, 1995), 3.

Donna Stein reinforced an important point in the scholarly discourse that surrounds artists books when she stressed the distinction between the antecedents, what Lucy Lippard refers to as the "ancestors of artists' books"[90] and their contemporary manifestations. Stein remarked, "When translated into English, the French term complicated the definition, because every *livre d'artiste* is an artist's book, but not every artist's book is a *livre d'artiste.*"[91] So then, what precisely constitutes an artists book? And, why are there variations in the use or non-use of the apostrophe?[92] Decades of scholarship have tried to unravel these and other thorny questions.

Clive Phillpot, one of the major contributors to scholarship on artists books, has written on the still unresolved definition of these works. He articulated a "spectrum"[93] of genres consisting of thirteen categories of artworks that he considered artists books including such works as comic books, magazines, documentation, artists' sketchbooks, and manifestos. Some works consist only of images; others consist only of text. Still others contain blank pages, empty interior spaces that direct attention to

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[90] Lucy Lippard, "The Artist's Book Goes Public," *Art in America* 65:1 (January-February 1977).
[91] Stein, "When a Book is More than a Book," 17.
[92] Many scholars follow Vanderlip's initial coining of the term and use the phrase "artists books" without the possessive apostrophe. Others prefer to indicate an individual work with the proper mark of possession, i.e., "artist's book" and the plural possessive of "artists' books" when indicating a group of works. For ease of use, I follow Vanderlip's formation to indicate the genre of these works, unless I am referring to *Codex Delilah* or other individual artworks as an "artist's book."
[93] Clive Phillpot, "Books by Artists and Books as Art," in *Artist/Author: Contemporary Artists' Books* (New York: D.A.P/Distributed Art Publishers, Inc., 1998), 38.

the materials that form the work. He developed this "taxonomy" as a "provisional structure" to illustrate the broad range of works and to propose a schema that would assist future consideration and criticism.[94] He further added to the debate when he created a distinction between "artists' books" and "bookworks." Phillpot used the former term to indicate "books and booklets authored by artists," while the later term defined "artworks in book form."[95] Although he noted the "mongrel nature" of artists books, with its "subspecies and hybrids," and he ultimately determined that the defining characteristics of such works were that "they reflect and emerge from the preoccupations and sensibilities of artists, as makers and citizens."[96]

Phillpot identified Ed Ruscha as the contemporary artist whose work demonstrated the book as a "primary vehicle for art."[97] Over a period of years, Ruscha produced multiple projects that interrogated the book form, beginning with his *Twentysix Gasoline Stations* in 1962. This work consisted of black and white photographs of twenty-six gasoline stations identified by name with a straightforward upper case text. For example, under the photograph of a gas station Ruscha placed the text "*FLYING A*.," the name of the gas station and "KINGMAN, ARIZONA," its location. Ruscha's success in getting these projects published as books and exhibited

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[94] Ibid., 50.
[95] Ibid., 31-32.
[96] Ibid., 32.
[97] Clive Phillpot, "Some Contemporary Artists and Their Books," in *Artists' Books: A Critical Anthology and Sourcebook*, ed. Joan Lyon (Rochester: The Visual Studies Workshop Press, 1985), 97.

in galleries as artworks established the book form as a legitimate mode of inquiry for artists. As a result, Phillpot positioned Ruscha's work as the model for subsequent works.

Lucy Lippard credited the appearance of artists books to an increased sense of social responsibility that emerged during the 60s as part of the tenor of the times. She understands them as "not books about art or on artists, but books *as* art. They can be all words, all images, or combinations thereof. At best, they are a lively hybrid of exhibition, narrative, and object…"[98] Artists engaged with the book form as a way of working against the "elitism" of the art world and its subsequent commodification of art objects.[99] Consumption, circulation, and accessibility of the art object concerned many of the artists of this period. In contrast to the 19th century French artists and their development of *livre d'artiste* as a response to increasing automation of the printing process, artists from the 60s and 70s embraced the ability of the printing press to reproduce multiple copies quickly and inexpensively. The idea of the book as "democratic multiple" emerged after World War II and influenced artists already sensitive to issues of accessibility.[100] Lippard notes the contributions of George Brecht of Fluxus fame and seconds Phillpot's emphasis on the impact of Ruscha's *Twentysix*

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[98] Lippard, "The Artist's Book Goes Public."
[99] Ibid.
[100] Johanna Drucker, "The Artist's Book as a Democratic Multiple," in *The Century of Artists' Books* (New York City: Granary Books, 1995), 69-91.

Gasoline Stations. She felt that his work pointed the way for the later development of Conceptual Art and its concern with the book as vehicle for visual art.[101] Twenty years after their emergence and despite all efforts to the contrary, Lippard pointed out that, for all but a select few people, artists books still required a definition.

Johanna Drucker has made significant contributions to the debate on artists books. She surveyed the major developments in the field over the last one hundred years and argues for an understanding of artists books as "the quintessential 20th century artform."[102] Her research documented artists books in every major movement in literature and art and noted that artists of the avant-garde and other art movements have often used these works to reflect the groups' beliefs, aspirations, and larger agendas. If we consider codices created by Chicanas and Chicanos as artists books, they certainly fall within this category.

Drucker acknowledged the inheritance from *livre d'artiste* and differentiated luxury editions from artists books by emphasizing that a *livre d'artiste* generally does not "interrogate the conceptual or material form of the book as part of its intention, thematic interests, or production activities."[103] She identified the concern with the book's form as one of the most important criteria distinguishing the two genres. She

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[101] Lippard, "The Artist's Book Goes Public."
[102] Drucker, *The Century of Artists' Books*, 1.
[103] Ibid., 3.

pointed out works of similar vein created before the 20th century and mentioned English artists William Blake and William Morris as important precursors who engaged with text and image and pushed the book form in a new direction.[104] Drucker also weighed in on the significance of Ruscha's *Twentysix Gasoline Stations* as a paradigm for 20th century artists books, but ultimately criticized scholars who use this single work as "the" point of origin and demonstrated the previous exploration of the form by the Surrealists[105] and Russian Futurists.[106]

Drucker asserted that artists books create a separate field within art history and positioned them as an "unique phenomenon of the 20th century."[107] She found that most attempts at a definition of artists books miss the mark, falling short by either being too broad or too restrictive. In her attempts at definition, Drucker articulated a "zone of activity," a place where various "disciplines, fields and ideas" intersect. She identified many of the issues that constitute the debate: Is the art object unique? Is it a single or multiple edition? Is it original and how do we define that term? What is the relationship between the maker and the object? Who generated the idea? Did the artist control all the elements of the work including its production? Did the means of

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[104] Ibid., 21-30.
[105] For more information, please see Renée Riese Hubert, *Surrealism and the Book* (Berkeley: University of California, 1988). For additional work by Hubert, see Renée Riese Hubert, "The Artist's Book: The Text and Its Rivals," *Visible Language* 25:2/3 (Spring 1991).
[106] Drucker, *The Century of Artists' Books*, 11.
[107] Ibid., 9.

production involve computer technology? As Drucker's "pioneering achievement"[108] demonstrates, few formal rules or material limitations corral today's artists books. In addition to the standard use of paper or similar products, these contemporary art objects consist of glass, various textiles, metal, and found objects. Artists also use a variety of materials to create images and texts in these books including bodily fluids and fibers, rather than the more usual pencil, ink, or paint.

In her overview, Drucker surveyed the multiple ways that artists engaged with the book form such as "The Book as Sequence," "Artist's Book as an Agent of Social Change," and "The Book as Conceptual Space." In her chapter on "The Codex and its Variations," Drucker states that the codex is "a very restrained form—conventionally made with standard-size pages fixed in a rigid sequence by being clasped or held on one side."[109] She accounts for works that run the gamut she considered codices from "a set of uniformly sized pages bound in a fixed and intentional sequence" to those that are "an accumulation of non–uniform pages in an unintentional and unfixed sequence…barely recognizable as a book."[110] Drucker credits China with the invention of paper in the first century of the Common Era and notes the proliferation

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[108] Renée Riese Hubert and Judd D. Hubert, *The Cutting Edge of Reading: Artists' Books* (New York: Granary Books, 1999), 13.
[109] Johanna Drucker, "The Codex and Its Variations," in *The Century of Artists' Books* (New York: Granary Books, 1995), 121.
[110] Ibid., 123.

of paper production by the Maya in the 7th and 8th centuries.[111] However, she neglects to mention that when Columbus arrived in the Americas, Maya book making had been practiced for at least one thousand years.[112] Moreover, although her work appeared several years after "The Chicano Codices" exhibit, regrettably Drucker does not mention the exhibit or earlier codices by Santa Contreras Barraza and Enrique Chagoya in her chapter on the codex form. She provides examples of what she views as codices including Michael Snow's *Cover to Cover* (1975) and Isidore Isou's *Le Grande Désordre* (*Chaos*) from 1960, while I find the structural experiments of Conrad Gleber's *Chicago Skyline* (1977) and the subject matter of Scott McCarney's *Memory Loss* from 1988 more in line with *Codex Delilah.*

Ultimately, Drucker and most scholars find it easier to demonstrate what artists books are not, rather provide a finite definition of what they are. Instead, they point out the necessity for more in-depth consideration, research, and critical evaluation before a specific definition can come to light that will adequately account for the full range of these works. Throughout the literature, scholars lament the absence of critical engagement with artists books as a genre and field of study. Dick Higgins suggested that the lack of criticism on the genre might come from the approach generally taken by most art historians. Higgins maintained that art historians often discuss art by

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[111] Ibid., 121.
[112] Brotherston, *Painted Books from Mexico*, 11.

analyzing the meaning, content, and style of the work as separate entities. He stated that this approach generally does not have adequate means or language to discuss an "experience" and that how a person experiences these works forms the artists books' *raison d'être* (reason for being). Higgins felt that this reluctance to attend to the process of personal response, kinesthetic or otherwise, results in a dearth of good criticism regarding this genre.[113] I concur with Higgins regarding the importance of expanding the approaches that art historians use to discuss works of art, especially those with performative or experiential aspects. In a later section of this dissertation, I suggest that we build on ideas from the fields of dance and theater, such as kinesthetic empathy, to enlarge our current critical models.

How do the issues raised by scholars of artists books apply to *Codex Delilah* and the other works from "The Chicano Codices" show? Do Chicana/o codices belong within the category of artists books, and if so, how and why? This study positions *Codex Delilah* as an artist's book and locates it within this contemporary genre or field. Although Montoya produced two versions, I consider it an unique one-of-a kind art object with a linear narrative structure, conceived for a Western audience while incorporating images, formal structures, and elements from earlier Mesoamerican models. In order to define the special niche that *Codex Delilah* inhabits within this

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[113] Dick Higgins, "A Preface," in *Artists' Books: A Critical Anthology and Sourcebook*, ed. Joan Lyons (Rochester: The Visual Studies Workshop Press, 1985), 12.

genre, I refer to the definitions articulated by Lippard and Drucker and comments made by Sanchez-Tranquilino. Certainly, Lucy Lippard's understanding of artists books as "a fragile vehicle for a weighty load of hopes and ideals" aptly expresses the nature of the work.[114] Drucker's view of some artists books as rare and auratic objects most precisely helps to place *Codex Delilah*'s form and function within this larger frame of American art production. Drucker explains that some artists books have an "inexplicable air of power, attraction, or uniqueness" and "emanate a precious or mystical or intriguing quality.[115] Of the works that Drucker discusses, Mira Schor's *The Book of Pages* (1976) and Tatana Kellner's *50 Years of Silence* (ironically, also from 1992), have the most in common with *Codex Delilah*. Schor attempts to create a sense of ancient mystery and spiritual power through her book's visual presentation. The artist treats the work's materials to heighten a feeling of secrecy and authority and by consciously trying to make the work appear old, precious, and sacred. The pages of the work are transparent so that layers of text merge into each other and form a cumulative visual presence and energy. The handwritten text is largely unreadable, used just to give the reader an indication of "ritual processes" or "private ceremonies" inscribed on its pages.[116] While the text in *Codex Delilah* is readily accessible, the

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[114]Lippard, "The Artist's Book Goes Public."
[115] Drucker, "The Codex and Its Variations," 93.
[116] Johanna Drucker, "The Artist's Book as a Rare and/or Auratic Object," in *The Century of Artists'*

repeated references to sacred sites, sacred people, and spiritual practices from multiple traditions infuse the work with auratic power.

Tatana Kellner's work, *50 Years of Silence*, breaks the silence regarding her mother's imprisonment in a Nazi death camp. Kellner visually presents her mother's story by placing a three-dimensional forearm with its prominently displayed tattooed number in the center of the codex. This tattoo was her camp or prisoner identification number. The artist placed a textual recounting of her mother's ordeal on several pages of text and cut out a silhouette that conformed to the forearm on each page. As the viewer turns individual pages, the arm remains the central focus as the paper pages move over and around the forearm. *Codex Delilah* and *50 Years of Silence* both assert suffering, loss, and cultural genocide, and use the body to convey their central themes.

Further, Sanchez-Tranquilino noted the parallels between contemporary artist books and "The Chicano Codices" in the introductory materials he developed for the 1992 exhibition.[117] Sanchez-Tranquilino felt that, as Chicana and Chicano artists, those participating in the exhibit inherited a "cultural patrimony" from the ancient books and his vision of the works went "far beyond the creation of a mere artist's book." He acknowledged that for the artists it might be important to consider the

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Books (New York: Granary Books, 1995), 103.

[117] I took the information in this paragraph from unpaginated materials provided courtesy of Delilah Montoya and used with the permission of Marcos Sanchez-Tranquilino.

material and "aesthetic" factors involved in artists books as a source of information and problem solving during the production of their codices. However, he ultimately felt that artists books are most often based on European models and cultural conceptions of what constitutes a book. Therefore, he encouraged the artists to engage their production of the work from the understanding of a Chicana/o codex within its specific "socio-historical context."

Codex Delilah holds an important position within the larger field of artist books and especially with those understood as possessing "auratic" power as just discussed. Simultaneously and more significantly, it securely belongs in the equally important group of codices produced by Chicanas and Chicanos who derive their inspiration from the original ancient "American" codex form. Montoya approached the development of *Codex Delilah* with the question: "What would Mesoamerican scribal traditions look like today if they had continued?"[118] While I consider codices produced by contemporary Chicanas and Chicanos as artists books, I suggest that they form a parallel set or genre that demands recognition as a uniquely "American" form of art, while recognizing their Mesoamerican roots and the continuity they express. Any discussion of these works must acknowledge this larger artistic inheritance.

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[118] Delilah Montoya, Telephone conversation with the author, 6 June 2003.

Chapter 2

Codex Delilah, Six Deer: Journey from Mexicatl to Chicana:

Formal Analysis and Context within Chicana/o Art

Codex Delilah: A Brief History

In 1991, The Mexican Museum in San Francisco engaged Marcos Sanchez-Tranquilino as Guest Curator for "The Chicano Codices: En*counter*ing Art of the Americas." In addition to his role as curator, Sanchez-Tranquilino concurrently served as the Executive Director of *Movimiento de Arte y Cultura Latino Americana* (MACLA) in San José, California. Sanchez-Tranquilino and Delilah Montoya had an existing personal and professional relationship that predated the 1992 exhibition because of her participation in "Chicano Art: Resistance and Affirmation, 1965-1985" (CARA), a landmark exhibition that opened at UCLA's Wight Gallery in September of 1990.[119] When he began to prepare for the "The Chicano Codices," Montoya was among the more than thirty artists Sanchez-Tranquilino targeted for the 1992 show. In a letter dated November 14, 1991, the Director of The Mexican Museum, María

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[119] CARA was the first large-scale exhibit of Chicana/o art produced by the joint effort of a national committee of Chicana/o scholars, artists, and administrators and a mainstream art institution. Considered a groundbreaking exhibition, it took six years to produce, toured nationally for three years, and brought previously marginalized works to a broader public. Please see Griswold del Castillo, McKenna, and Yarbro-Bejarano, eds., *Chicano Art: Resistance and Affirmation, 1965-1985*. For an in-depth analysis of the exhibit, see Alicia Gaspar de Alba, *Chicano Art Inside/Outside the Master's House: Cultural Politics and the CARA Exhibition* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998).

Acosta Colón, invited Montoya to participate in "The Chicano Codices."[120] Since the museum had scheduled the exhibition to open in September of the following year, Sanchez-Tranquilino requested that the artists submit a proposal by early December 1991 and required that the completed work arrive in San Francisco by the beginning of April 1992.

Along with the letter of invitation, Sanchez-Tranquilino enclosed a two-page document that introduced the artists to his conception of the exhibit and outlined the parameters governing the content, size, form, manner of exhibition, and materials of the works. Under the section that specified material and medium requirements, he attempted a bit of levity when he referred to the fiery destruction of the original codices with the following comment, "A humorous precaution would suggest that you use fire-retardant materials, just in case!" In this communiqué, Sanchez-Tranquilino noted to the artists that the ancient codices took their names from the people who "collected" or "discovered" them. Working against this practice, Sanchez-Tranquilino asked that the artists include either their first or last name in the work's title. He also provided the artists with selected reference materials by Zelia Nuttall, Ester Pasztory, and Muriel Porter Weaver that included illustrations and information on Maya,

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[120] I base many of the comments made in this section on unpaginated documents from the "Chicano Codices" exhibition made available to me from the archives of Holly Barnet-Sanchez and materials given to me by Delilah Montoya. Marcos Sanchez-Tranquilino prepared the majority of these materials and gave me permission to quote from them.

Mixtec, and Mexica/Aztec codices.

Montoya responded just before Thanksgiving 1991 with a "thumbnail" sketch and a two-page narration that described her initial idea for the work. The sketch filled a letter-sized piece of paper and showed a long rectangular form folded into seven pages or panels.[121] She intended to construct the codex from "photographic, drawn and appropriated images collaged on amatl paper."[122] Because Montoya first adopted the Central Mexican *Codex Borgia* as her model, individual pages had a square format. The pages contained a single register and the footprint motif[123] from ancient codices snaked across all of the panels. In a later drawing, Montoya roughly sketched additional sections on the first page or panel, two sections above and one below, an addition that transformed the individual page format from square to rectangular. The artist revised her original concept of the format after studying various versions of the *Dresden Codex* because as Montoya puts it, "The *Dresden* just sent me!"[124] These additional sections became the separate registers, or distinct horizontal sections of visual space, present in the final artwork.

In the written portion of the proposal, Montoya first suggested the title as

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[121] Ancient codices often adopted a "screenfold" pattern, meaning that a long strip was bent into sections or pages that resembled the folded edges of a fan or screen.
[122] In this section, I quote from the artist's proposal submitted by Delilah Montoya to Marcos Sanchez-Tranquilino dated November 22, 1991. The material was provided courtesy of the artist.
[123] In Mesoamerican codices, the small black footprints or the footprint motif indicates physical movement through space. Montoya adopts this convention to chart Six-Deer's journey.
[124] Delilah Montoya, conversation with the author, Atlanta, Georgia, 19 February 2005.

"Delilah Codex: Six Deer" and spoke of her desire to "synthesize pre-Columbian history and myth from Meso-American to our own controversial modern times in the United States Southwest, Aztlán."[125] The artist's concern with how histories of Chicanas and Chicanos have been constructed resounded clearly throughout her proposal. She described Chicanas and Chicanos as "a colonized people" whose history had been recorded "from a foreign European perspective" that often negated important issues and viewed "concerns relevant to us…as obstructions to colonization." Montoya stated that her codex would look at the encounter between indigenous and European cultures "within the framework of a feminine vision" and would adopt a "Mestizaje perspective."[126] She intended to create an historical interpretation of the impact of European contact on the peoples of the Americas and reveal how it continues to affect contemporary Chicanas/os. Montoya planned to move her main character, Six-Deer, "through time and space" so that the child would "learn and simultaneously reveal to us our historical identity" and demonstrate that survival for Chicanas and Chicanos required "learning to live within a multicultural heritage." Further, the artist strongly addressed issues of gender when she declared, "As a

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[125] Artist's proposal, provided courtesy of Delilah Montoya. Aztlán is understood as the birthplace of the peoples of Central Mexico. In the 60s, Chicanas/os updated their understanding of the term and used the word to refer to a sense of place or community. The word indicates both a physical location of origin in the Southwest and a spiritual connection between individual Chicanas/os that exists whatever their location.

[126] Montoya self-identifies as a mestiza, a woman of mixed race created from the intermingling of indigenous and European peoples. The term "Mestizaje" literally means "mixture."

Chicana I am conscious of how the historical contributions of women have been undermined or completely ignored. This project can be considered my attempt to correct that injustice."

In late December, Sanchez-Tranquilino responded enthusiastically to Montoya's proposal and encouraged her to expand her subtitle, suggesting "A Woman's Journey from Mixteca to Chicana." He felt that the expansion would allow "uninitiated visitors" easier access to the material. The curator encouraged all the artists in the exhibition to include some form of subtitle. Montoya followed Sanchez-Tranquilino's suggestion, inverted the initially proposed title, and extended the subtitle to include the phrase "Journey from Mexicatl to Chicana" to create *Codex Delilah, Six Deer: Journey from Mexicatl to Chicana* as the final title of the work.

Back in Albuquerque, Montoya devised the initial storyline, drafted its written narrative, and then asked Cecilio García-Camarillo to collaborate with her on the text. In an ongoing dialogue between Montoya and García-Camarillo, the text underwent several revisions. During the production of the codex, Montoya suffered a car accident and sustained a back injury. The physical therapy necessary to heal her condition required a leave from her job as medical photographer at the University of New Mexico. The subsequent recovery time allowed her the opportunity to work on *Codex*

Delilah.[127]

Montoya produced a second version of the codex in 1992, *Codex Delilah, Six Deer: A Journey from Mechica to Chicana*, and altered the title slightly to indicate the variation (Fig. 2.1). Santa Fe curators Dominic Arquero, Ellen Chadwick, Imogene Goodshot, and Larry Ogan, organized a show entitled "Quincentennial Perspective: Artists Discover Columbus" and exhibited this version of *Codex Delilah* along with seventy other artworks that represented a different point of view of the anniversary of Columbus's arrival. The show first opened at the Castillo Cultural Center in New York City in 1992. Later, it returned to Santa Fe where it opened at the Gallery at the Rep (Santa Fe's repertory theater) during the week of the Columbus Day observance. The exhibition strove to present a balanced view of the Quincentennial and equally represented "Native American, Hispanic, and Anglo" artists.[128] Stanford University in Palo Alto, California, purchased the second version of *Codex Delilah* in May of 1995. The Special Archives of the Cecil H. Green Library currently hold the work, listed as *Codex #2 Delilah, Six Deer: A Journey from Mechica to Chicana*, as part of their collections. Some differences exist between the two versions because time constraints limited the detail that Montoya provided in *Codex #2 Delilah.* The lavish multiple

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[127] Delilah Montoya, Telephone conversation with the author, March 2002.
[128] Larry Ogan, Executive Director of the Santa Fe Council for the Arts, provided me with the information on this exhibition. Larry Ogan, telephone conversation with the author, 1 March 2005.

colors of gouache[129] the artist used in the upper registers appear only in the first or "full color" version.[130] Montoya further differentiated the second version when she painted Gregorian dates on each panel underneath the Maya glyphs.

For the 1992 exhibit in San Francisco, museum staff applied a wire armature to the reverse of the codex according to Montoya's specifications. The armature helped mount the codex to the gallery wall and supported its fragile paper structure. The armature held the work in a screenfold shape with the fourth panel parallel to the wall while Panels 1, 2, 3 and Panels 5, 6, and 7 jutted outward in crisp forty-five degree angles. The exhibit opened on September 23, 1992, and closed a month later. It then traveled to several locations in the United States.[131] The Mexican Museum secured funds to purchase some of the works for their permanent collection, but was unable to acquire *Codex Delilah* at exhibition's end. In July of 1995, curator Tere Romo contacted Montoya via letter to arrange for the work's shipment back to Albuquerque and expressed The Mexican Museum's regrets.

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[129] Gouache is a water-based media that produces an opaque surface rather than the translucent appearance of watercolor.
[130] Delilah Montoya, Telephone conversation with the author, 17 October 2001.
[131] After the exhibition closed at The Mexican Museum in San Francisco, California, on November 29, 1992, it traveled to the following locations: 1) the Foothills Art Center in Golden Colorado, Colorado, from January 7 to February 17, 1993; 2) the Art Galleries at California State University, Northridge in Northridge, California, from August 30 to October 2, 1993; 3) the Plaza de la Raza in Los Angeles, California, from November 18, 1993 to February 1994; the Centro Cultura de la Raza in San Diego, California, from July to August of 1994; and the El Centro del la Raza in Seattle, Washington, from October 4 to November 5, 1994.

When the artwork returned to Montoya's care, she realized that for storage and preservation purposes the codex needed some form of protection.[132] At that time, she fabricated exterior panels of heavy board and covered them in red and black Japanese paper (Fig. 2.2). Montoya chose these colors to refer to the red and black ink used by ancient scribes to create their codices.[133] *Codex Delilah* remained in Montoya's personal collection for several years. During that time, María Teresa Márquez, Associate Professor and Curator of Chicana/o Studies and Southwest Literature at the Center for Southwest Research (CSWR) in Albuquerque, New Mexico, tirelessly advocated for its acquisition. The CSWR purchased the codex from Montoya in late 2000 and cataloged it as part of their Special Collections on December 19, 2000.

In 2004, Laura Addison, Curator at the Museum of Fine Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico, produced "Beyond Words: Artists and the Book" and selected *Codex Delilah* as one of the twenty-three works included in the exhibition.[134] The show opened on October 22, 2004, in the Museum's Beauregard Gallery and closed on January 23, 2005. Addison displayed only Panels 5 and 6 of the codex, sections of the work that illustrate the historical periods of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920) and the

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[132] Delilah Montoya, interview by the author, digital audio recording, Houston, Texas, 13 March 2004.
[133] For more information about the techniques, materials, and content of ancient codices, please see Elizabeth Hill Boone and Walter D. Mignolo, eds., *Writing Without Words: Alternative Literacies in Mesoamerica and the Andes* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), Brotherston, *Painted Books from Mexico,* Coe and Kerr, *The Art of the Maya Scribe,* Boone, *Stories in Red and Black*.
[134] For a review of the exhibition, please see Elizabeth Cook-Romero, "Wonder under the covers," *Pasatiempo*, October 22-28, 2004.

Chicano Movement of the 1960s. The exhibition emphasized artists "whose work engages with books, either as objects in and of themselves or as intellectual explorations" and included *Codex Delilah* as an example of work that took its "inspiration from book "technologies," both old and new."[135] When the exhibition concluded in January 2005, *Codex Delilah* returned to its archival box in the CSWR.

***Codex Delilah*: Formal Analysis**

In this section of the dissertation, I embark on a detailed formal analysis of *Codex Delilah, Six-Deer: Journey from Mexicatl to Chicana* and limit my remarks to the first version of the codex produced by Montoya. The first section of the formal analysis explains the basic dimensions, materials, and construction methods used to create the work. To prevent repetition, this section explains the recurring conventions Montoya used in most panels throughout the work. The second section of the formal analysis describes each panel of the work in descending sequential registers, delineating the various processes and techniques the artist used to create the work as well as the arrangement of figures, photographic images, and texts. Chapter 4 provides an in-depth analysis of the symbols, images, people, and places Montoya uses to produce the sacred. However, since the representation of the sacred forms the central concern of this dissertation, I occasionally explain sacred symbols and references to

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[135] I have taken these quotes from the introductory text included as part of "Beyond Words" exhibition made available to me by Laura Addison.

spirituality in this section.

Codex Delilah: Materials and Methods

To create the base or body of *Codex Delilah,* Montoya constructed a single rectangular structure from several sheets of handmade *amate* or fig bark paper,[136] the amatl she mentioned in her artist's proposal. She purchased the paper in Juárez, Mexico and, because it was handmade, the amate varied considerably in tone and texture. The sheets of paper appeared in various natural shades: 1) a fairly uniform vanilla or cream-color; 2) a mottled variant with swirled patterns of cream, medium brown, and deep chocolate brown; and 3) a fairly uniform dark brown color. Further, the feel of the codex's surface varies among the three paper variations, with the sheets of combined color tones possessing the roughest texture. The artist used cream-colored paper to form the primary surface of the codex and placed assorted hues in different sections of the work. When an individual sheet of paper ended, she glued additional lengths together at the vertical edges of certain panels creating almost invisible seams. She folded the resulting rectangular form into a continuous accordion-

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[136] The term amate is the Spanish version of the Central Mexican Nahuatl word *amatl* meaning paper. Ancient Central Mexicans made paper from the *amaquahuitl* or paper (*ama*) tree (*quahuitl*). In his book on Aztec and Maya papermaking, Victor Wolfgang Von Hagen describes a post-conquest eyewitness account of the papermaking process by scientific chronicler Francisco Hernández. Hernández stated that the paper sheets measured 18 inches long by 13 1/2 inches wide. Paper played an important role in ancient Central Mexican life. In addition to a surface for pictographic information, it was used as clothing, as tribute required from the Mexica Empire's subjects, and served a variety of ritual purposes. For more information, see Victor Wolfgang Von Hagen, *The Aztec and Maya Papermakers* (Mineola: Dover Publications, Inc., 1999), 35-41.

like book of seven individual panels, with each panel measuring approximately twenty-nine inches high by fifteen inches wide.[137] From the outset, Montoya's choice of fig bark paper links her work to ancient codex traditions because Mesoamerican scribes used amate as well as animal skins for many of the ancient codices.

Using a mixture of media including gouache, an opaque water-based paint, and photography, the artist inscribed, painted, transferred, imbedded, and glued plastic objects, multiple images, and various texts on the amate foundation. A proficient photographic printmaker, Montoya used several methods to initially produce and later alter photographic images resident on the surface of the work.[138] One technique Montoya used to transfer photocopied images involved the use of solvent and a lithography press. She took a black and white photocopy of a particular image, adhered the solvent to the back of the paper, placed the photocopy over the amate paper, layered blotter paper and several sheets of newspaper on top, and then ran the entire series of layered papers through the press. The photocopy process reversed the original image and created black and white images regardless of the picture's initial color. The artist placed most of the results of this process in the background of several

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[137] Accounts of the codex's measurements vary. The checklist from the exhibition catalog lists the work's dimensions as 20 x 80 x 13 3/4 in. The delivery receipt filled out when The Mexican Museum received the work on March 27, 1992, listed its dimensions as 29 x 80 x 14 in. The CSWR lists *Codex Delilah's* measurements as 76 x 42 cm. I include measurements so that the reader can get a general sense of the work's proportions rather than provide a precise account.

[138] Delilah Montoya, personal communication with the author, 7 January 2005.

panels.

Montoya acquired many of the photocopied pictures from various pre and post-contact Mesoamerican codices, prints by Mexican artist José Guadalupe Posada, and numerous other sources. García-Camarillo gave her a book by Miguel León-Portilla[139] that discussed the conquest and contained several reproduced images from a wide variety of codices. Montoya used this book as a central resource for the visual material found in *Codex Delilah.* The predominance of black and white images in the codex may be due to the technical challenges Montoya encountered during the art making process. The surface of the amate paper made the color transfer process difficult because the images did not adhere as easily as those transferred using solvent and pressure.[140]

To create the color images in the work, Montoya photographed local people including actresses, an activist, a mid-wife, and family members. Then, she transferred color photographs via a heat process. In Register 2 of Panels 3 and 4, she transferred color photographs to the amate base, cut out sections from the original photograph, and then attached these pieces of the original color photographs to the transferred color images. For the black and white images of people, Montoya repeated the transfer

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[139] Miguel León-Portilla, *The Broken Spears: The Aztec Account of the Conquest of Mexico*, Expanded and updated ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992).
[140] Delilah Montoya, conversation with the author, Atlanta, Georgia, 19 February 2005.

process but used black and white photographs as the transfer source. To emphasize the photocopied and the transferred images, she applied various colors of gouache to portions of certain pictures, especially in Register 2 of Panel 2. In addition to inserting sections of photographs into a heat-transferred replica, Montoya embedded entire photographs into the amate base in specific areas of each panel. The use of techniques that piece together images through multiple processes parallels the larger concept of *Codex Delilah*, the "piecing together of history and identity." Although the creative process that produced this codex resembled a quilt or collage approach, the resulting work evidenced surprising formal and visual unity.

The previous chapter discussed the ways Mesoamerican codices arranged their presentation of histories and sacred information and traced how the artist referenced these structures in *Codex Delilah.* Montoya enhanced the unity of her codex by alluding to content of these ancient models while also basing her formal organization on many of the conventions of these books. She adopted the Maya screenfold format and rectangular page dimensions present in the *Dresden, Paris, Madrid*, and *Grolier* codices.[141] Individual pages retained the rectangular proportion of Maya works rather than the square proportions of books from Mexico (Fig 2.3). Since she intended the work for museum display, Montoya placed visual and textual information on only one

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[141] The format of these ancient Mesoamerican codices is generally twice as high as it is wide. Chapter 1 provides further discussion of these codices.

side of the codex, thereby breaking from the double-sided tradition of the Maya codices. After exhibition, when issues of archival preservation surfaced, the artist wove a series of red and black book covers made from heavy handmade paper around the codex with common twine. The use of this heavier material continued another Maya book convention, as front and back covers of a heavier weight paper or animal skins often protected the interior pages of Maya screenfold books.

In addition to adopting the Maya screenfold format, Montoya followed ancient Mesoamerican conventions of delineating space and indicating movement through the manuscripts. Maya and Mexican codices generally used colored lines, frequently red or black, to separate information into registers and direct the intended reading order. Montoya followed this method when she divided her work into specific spatial areas by attaching a narrow strip of dark amate paper horizontally to define each register. The artist placed three register indicators in each panel. They measure about three-eights to one-quarter of an inch in height and vary in length according to the panel's width. In most cases, they run the entire width of each individual panel. The *Dresden* and other Maya books contain three registers, usually of equal height and, using this model, Montoya divided all seven panels of *Codex Delilah* into three horizontal registers or "zones" of varying size. For ease of discussion, this author treats the descending horizontal sections of space as *four* separate registers, rather than Montoya's intended three zones. Three of the four registers offer evocative images and

texts, while the fourth and lowest register contains a computer-generated narrative that Montoya developed in conjunction with Garcia-Camarillo.

Within Montoya's division of space and treatment of movement, she consciously incorporated several other Mesoamerican artistic practices to shape the space of individual panels. First, she drew on a "two-dimensional flattening of space" present in the ancient books. Second, she created an uncertain orientation to both background and foreground. Montoya left the figures' relationship to space ambiguous when she chose not to clarify if the characters and other visual elements of the work "stand" on the ground. As a result, the figures seem to "float" over the surface of the codex. Third, the artist emphasized the linear quality of the work and this quality strengthens the two-dimensional nature of the codex. Fourth, like the Mixtec codices where intensely saturated blocks of color form the individual figures against a white ground, Montoya used "selective coloring on a flat field."[142]

Further, Montoya intended that the composition of each panel reflect the "Mesoamerica cosmic order" and referred to the individual registers as "zones." The first register or "deity zone" represented the heavens held up by four figures, one in each cardinal direction. The second register or "middle zone" represented the "earthly realm" where the "characters move." Montoya knew that the concepts of space and

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[142] I have taken the quoted references in this paragraph from written material given me by the artist and from conversations between Montoya and myself, Atlanta, Georgia, 19 February 2005.

time were of critical importance in Mesoamerican cosmology and represented these notions with her version of a "place glyph" at the bottom of the "middle zone." In Mesoamerican codices, place glyphs are pictographic elements that identify the location of events. For example, the place glyph for Aztlán as pictured in the *Codex Boturini* consists of a temple with flora emerging from the temple's top surface (Fig 2.4). The temple structure stands for the word "Place" and the flora indicates "Reeds." This produces the verbal equivalent of the "The Place of the Reeds" and identifies Aztlán. Rather than create a pictographic representation of place in the Mesoamerican manner, the artist used a photographic image to indicate the location of the panel's events. In addition to the photographic "place glyphs," she stressed the notion of time by including Maya glyphs in this zone. In contrast to Montoya's division of each panel into three zones, I treat the place glyph as a separate register in my discussion. In the final zone, Montoya intended to reference the "concept of the underworld" with the placement of the written text alone and did not specifically address issues solely related to this part of the cosmos in the text.[143] Further, Montoya and García-Camarillo knew that diviners, priests, and other spiritual specialists used the images from ancient Mesoamerican books as a basis for oral performance or the telling of stories. Montoya wanted the images in the deity and middle zones to function as "cues" for the

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[143] Quotes taken from material provided by the artist.

storyteller. However, since her goal in creating the codex was to reclaim and preserve history or "story," she did not want Six-Deer's story to be lost, so she recorded it in the bottom zone or register.

In additional to following a strict definition in terms of zone, the registers of each panel repeat a closely defined format in terms of content and size. The first (top) registers vary in height from four to four and one half inches and contain four deity figures from Maya cosmology (Fig 2.5). The second registers provide the most complex visual material and constitute the largest physical portion of the codex at approximately twelve and three quarter inches high. In these registers, Montoya presents the visual narrative with transferred color and black and white images, transferred photocopied images, hand-painted Spanish text, and painted Maya glyphs indicating Long Count or Initial Series dates.[144] Using a collage technique, Montoya applied small torn fragments of hand and machine-made papers to the work. The paper fragments contained handwritten Spanish words or phrases rendered in a doubled outline of red-brown paint. The texts crystallize the major action of each panel,

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[144] A form of Maya calendrics, Long Count or initial series dates measure periods of time from the origin of the current cycle of the Maya universe that began in 3114 BCE. The current era contains a large cycle of 1,872,000 days or thirteen *baktuns*, periods of time measured in groups of 144,000 days. Subsets of the baktun consist of *katuns,* or periods of 7,200 days, *tuns*, or periods of 360 days, *uinals*, periods of 20 days, and *kins,* periods of a single day. The initial series glyphs consist of six glyphs, including an introductory glyph followed by five successive glyphs indicating baktun, katun, tun, unial, and kin designations. For more information on Maya calendrics, see Robert J. Sharer, *The Ancient Maya*, 5th ed. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 567-570.

somewhat like speech bubbles from popular culture cartoons.

In the second registers of the codex, each set of glyphs consists of eight sequential vertical images painted with multiple colors of gouache (Fig. 2.6). Montoya places the glyphs in a single column on the left-hand side of Panels 1, 3, and 6 and on the right-hand sides of Panels 2, 5, and 7. Panel 4 constitutes the solitary exception to this practice where the artist splits the glyphs into two vertical columns with four glyphs placed on either side of the page. The glyphs are approximately one and one half inches wide and vary from nine and one half inches to ten inches in height. In addition to dating each panel, the glyphs further emphasize connections to Mesoamerican cosmology, cycles of time, and artistic inheritance. Montoya produced the glyphs by first painstakingly researching the exact dates or dates within a certain temporal period she wished to portray.[145] Then she put a photocopy of the glyph series on top of a light table and placed amate paper over the glyphs. Lastly, the artist painted the glyphs directly onto the amate surface freehand following the outlines of the photocopy illuminated by the light table below.[146]

In the third registers, the artist inserted a color photograph into an amate frame

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[145] Montoya consulted the work of J. Eric S. Thompson when compiling the glyphs used in *Codex Delilah*. See John Eric Sidney Thompson, Sir, *Maya Hieroglyphic Writing: An Introduction*, 2nd. ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1960), John Eric Sidney Thompson, Sir, *A Commentary on the Dresden Codex: A Maya Hieroglyphic Book* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1972), John Eric Sidney Thompson, Sir, *Maya Hieroglyphs Without Tears* (London: British Museum, 1972).
[146] Delilah Montoya, conversation with the author, Atlanta, Georgia, 19 February 2005.

that Montoya refers to as a "window mat."[147] These photographs emphasize the topographical features of the story's various locations, record the changing terrain of Six-Deer's journey, and create a map of the child's physical journey (Fig. 2.7). The third registers of each panel are approximately the same height as the first registers (four inches), but the Maya glyphs generally offset the photographs to one side, thereby compressing the width of the registers. Rather than conduct separate photo shoots for each of these locations, Montoya frequently drew upon existing photographs from her archives. For example, the artist had previously traveled to the Maya site of Palenque in southeast Mexico to record the site's architecture and she used one of these previously taken photographs in the third register of Panel 1.

The fourth and lowest registers generally measure six inches high with some individual variation. The treatment of the amate varies most in these sections of the codex. While Montoya used the creamy vanilla colored amate for the surface of the upper three registers, in the fourth registers she overlaid this base with additional pieces of the mottled paper for Panels 1, 2, 6, and 7 and the deep chocolate amate for the center Panels 3, 4, and 5. The first and last two panels frame the darker central portion and, when viewing the work as a whole, Montoya's conscious placement creates a harmonious visual flow. She repeated the window mat technique from the

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[147] Delilah Montoya, Personal communication with the author, 7 January 2005.

third registers and inserted a computer-generated text into the amate layer below (Fig. 2.8). Montoya presented the fully justified text in two columns of approximate height and formatted the text with a small-scale sans serif font similar to Arial, Gil Sans, or Verdana.

The red and black book covers Montoya added to *Codex Delilah* measure approximately thirty inches in height. When viewing the work, either the heavier red or black covered board appears behind the work and extends approximately one half to one inch below and above each panel of the interior codex surface. This one-inch area created by the codex's covers also frames the left side of Panel 1 and the right side of Panel 7. In order to secure the screenfold sheet to its covers, Montoya punctured small holes into both the cover board and the codex and wove lengths of twine between them. The twine appears on the left and right sides of each panel: 1) at the top of the fourth or bottom registers and 2) at the top of the second registers just below the dark amate paper the divides the first and second registers. When the twine emerges in these areas, it looks like a small stitch in the paper about one inch long and one-quarter of an inch wide. These "stitches" lie parallel to the lines formed by the register markers. The twine's color matches the cream-colored amate foundation and, much like the panels' seams, does not draw attention from the work, although its raised surface adds additional texture and increases the unique character of the work.

***Codex Delilah*, Panel 1, Register 1**

Having introduced the general artistic and technical conventions that the artist repeats throughout the codex, the next section consists of a formal analysis of *Codex Delilah* and describes a single panel at a time by considering each descending register in turn. I begin the formal analysis in this section with a detailed account of Montoya's treatment of the figures in the first register of Panel 1 (Fig 2.9). However, because Montoya took these images directly from the *Dresden Codex*, she did not design or control their movements, she only "staged" them according to what she wanted the story to communicate. Therefore, I limit my discussion of these figures in later panels to the changes in the figures' demeanor, posture, and pose, and show how these factors relate to the panel's larger events. Montoya used the deity figures to illustrate the increasing imbalance in the world that resulted from European contact and I trace how the conflict between these figures intensifies in Montoya's visual representation. The conflict that Montoya presents occurs because the four sons of Itzamná and Ix-Chel war with each other for power. As a result, the "cosmos became out of sync and the continuum of time was threatened."[148]

The top register of Panel 1 consists of a small rectangular space graced with four painted multi-colored deity figures. Montoya spaced these figures evenly across

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[148] I have taken this quote from material written by the artist.

the register and a small amount of unadorned creamy amate paper separates them from each other. These images from Maya cosmology share elements with figures known as *Bacabs* (Skybearers) and *Chacs*. Born from a liaison between Itzamná, first priest and the inventor of books and writing, and moon goddess Ix-Chel (She of the Rainbow), each of the four brothers that form the Skybearers "bears up" a distinct corner of the universe. In his *Relación de las cosas de Yucatan*, Diego de Landa, described these figures and linked each with a specific cardinal direction.

> They said that they were four brothers, whom God placed, when he created the work, at the four corners of it, holding up the sky so that it should not fall. They also said of these *Bacabs* that they escaped when the world was destroyed by the deluge.[149]

Montoya refers to these symbols as both Bacabs and Chacs, so I would like to augment the interpretation of these characters by a brief consideration of how the Bacabs, Chacs, and *Pauahtun* intersect.[150] Karl Taube suggests that the Bacabs may relate to Pauahtun, an older Maya deity, who manifests in a four-part aspect and usually holds up the sky as personified mountains, one in each direction of the Maya universe.[151] Paul Schellhas, the first scholar to coordinate name glyphs with

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[149] Karl Taube, *Aztec and Maya Myths*, 2nd ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), 69.
[150] Delilah Montoya, telephone conversation with the author, 17 October 2001.
[151] Taube, *Aztec and Maya Myths*, 67.

representations of gods in the Maya codices, assigned these figures a specific letter.[152] God B and God N from the Schellhas system resemble the deities Montoya uses in the first register of the codex and correspond with Red and White Chac. Not only does God N support the sky, linking his representation with a sky bearing function, but also his name is written phonetically as Pauahtun.[153]

Maya cosmology closely links the Bacabs with the Maya rain god Chac who also possess four aspects, each connected to a specific cardinal direction. Schellhas understands Chac as God B and finds this god generally depicted with a large drooping nose and some form of weapon such as a stone axe, a serpent, or flame or torch, elements that symbolize rain, thunder, and lightning and reinforce God B's association with rain. According to Mesoamerican beliefs, flint and obsidian formed as the result of lightning strikes.[154] Most interesting for this study, Chac figures occasionally wear or hold a personified flint. Therefore, Montoya connects Six-Deer with these deities on the first page of *Codex Delilah* when the girl's spiritual elder gives Six-Deer a flint that she wears throughout the codex.[155]

Montoya replicates figures found in the Maya *Dresden Codex* as described above and marks the four Bacabs with symbolic colors. Although each figure

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[152] Mary Miller and Karl Taube, *An Illustrated Dictionary of the Gods and Symbols of Ancient Mexico and the Maya* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1993), 146.
[153] Ibid., 148.
[154] Ibid., 88.
[155] A detailed discussion of the symbolism connected with flint follows in Chapter 4.

possesses multiple colored accents, the artist primarily uses a single color to bring them to life. From left to right, the Bacabs are white, red, yellow, and black. If we accept these figures as Chacs, then from left to right along the first register we see: *Sac Xib Chac*, the White Chac of the North, *Chac Xib Chac*, the Red Chac of the East, *Kan Xib Chac*, the Yellow Chac of the South, and *Ek Xib Chac*, the Black Chac of the West. This configuration follows a ritual pattern observed by many indigenous peoples of the Americas, including native North Americans. The sequence creates a clockwise placement of the cardinal directions, white/(north), red/(east), yellow/(south), and black/(west). In the Americas, ritual observances often begin with gifts or prayers offered to the spirits of the four directions in this same clockwise sequence. This reinforces my later discussion of the spiritual and sacred elements present in the work. Perhaps by acknowledging these forces in this precise sequence, the artist subtly consecrates the codex in the first panel. For ease of use, I will refer to the Bacabs by their symbolic color from this point onward.

In the first register of Panel 1, all four figures hold a weapon in their left hand in a raised or striking position. Red, Yellow, and Black Bacab, kneel, crouch, or sit upon what resembles brown tree stumps, and each resting place generates brown vines with numerous green leaves. In contrast, on the extreme left-hand side, White Bacab floats in the upper register without a specific anchoring element, although the darker amate paper band that separates the first register from the second confines the Bacab

in its upper left hand position. This Bacab kneels with its legs underneath its hips, reminiscent of a "sitting on your heels" position. By this, I mean that the deity's weight balances on its knees and the surface of its toes, while its hips rest against the back section of its heels where the Achilles tendon lies. All of the Bacabs possess grotesque or exaggerated features and White Bacab is no exception. White Bacab has a misshapen, bulbous nose that projects over its open gaping jaw and holds a hafted stone axe in its left hand in a relaxed but ready manner.

Each Bacab wears various accessories including necklaces made of large-scale round blue beads, earrings, ear flares, wrist and ankle bands, and an assortment of head ornaments. A large light blue circle and three loops of a darker blue color cascade from the central sphere, also painted light blue, that comprise White Bacab's ear ornament. A blood red rectangle joins the looped section to the upper circular part of the ornament. Additionally, White Bacab wears wrist and ankle bands fashioned by Montoya in yellow, gray, and red paint.

To White Bacab's right, Red Bacab assumes a kneeling position on a large brown tree stump. The Bacab's red toes end with claw-like toenails and its feet fall behind the brown stump. From the lower base of the stump, two brown vines emerge and flow forward directly in front of Red Bacab's lower body. The vines droop in graceful forward arcs that end in heart-shaped green leaves. Red Bacab wears a gray, white, and red ornament at its waist and sports ankle and wristbands similar to those of

the other Bacabs. In left profile, Red Bacab holds an axe in an upright position directly in front of its large, beak-like nose. This Bacab brandishes its axe at a forty-five degree angle in front of its chest, it as if confronting an enemy or defending its cardinal direction.

Yellow Bacab, the third in the series, straddles a small brown stump in left profile. A branch snakes up from the base of the stump and ends with green leaves at face level. This Bacab extends its left leg forward in a downward forty-five degree angle as if to counterbalance its upraised arm. Its right foot appears immediately behind the stump with its yellow toes just grazing the ground. This position opens its body to the viewer to a greater degree than the other Bacabs and reveals a section of a detailed headdress from flows from ear to knee. Yellow Bacab holds the axe at head level with its left arm extended slightly behind its body. Of all the Bacabs, Yellow Bacab appears most able and likely to inflict a blow.

On the extreme right side of the register, the fourth and final Bacab of the four, Black Bacab, sits in a relaxed manner on top of a brown tree stump. This figure, like White Bacab, holds its axe in a relaxed manner and it angles downward at its left side. Like all the Bacabs in this panel, Black Bacab faces in left profile and wears both ankle and wrist bands. He wears a flowing white garment somewhat reminiscent of Six-Deer's costume (discussed in the next section) because it contains two parallel decorative red bands near the hemline. Of all the Skybearers, this fourth Bacab

appears most at rest. A white and red robe covers its body and prevents any determination of bodily position, while a solitary and loosely dangling black leg escapes from underneath the robe's painted folds.

Directly underneath these figures and to mark the register, Montoya placed a small strip of dark brown amate. The strip does not completely separate the space of the upper register from the register below. Like the red lines in the *Codex Nuttall* that occasionally break and turn at ninety-degree angles, the dark amate strip used to separate the first and second registers ends halfway underneath White Bacab on the extreme left-hand side. Directly underneath this figure, the artist has placed another image from the *Dresden Codex* that looks like a snake. Created from mustard yellow paint, the snake-like form has small red dots along its length that emphasize its sharp curves. This image appears repeatedly in the *Dresden Codex* and often other entities emerge from its mouth, understood as the maw of the underworld.

***Codex Delilah*, Panel 1, Register 2**

The central character of *Codex Delilah,* Six-Deer, first appears in the upper-most right section of the second register in a small black and white representation. She stands in left three-quarter profile and gazes downward with a slight smile on her face, while her left foot moves into space and causes her full skirt to ripple in generous folds. Her feet are bare. She bends her left arm at the elbow, her fingers slightly spread and outstretched at shoulder height. Her right arm, partially obscured from view, has

swung forward at hip level to counterbalance her first step and pauses a few inches in front of her body. Her clothing does not restrict her movement. She wears a prominent ornament on her left ear, reminiscent of a Maya earplug. The earring is about half the size of her ear and consists of an outer white circle inlaid with black. This black and white representation, transferred from a photograph, obscures the full beauty of her costume visible in color versions throughout the remainder of the panel.

Four single black footprint separate this small image from Six-Deer's next appearance. The footprints, while retaining the same general form, all appear slightly different. This suggests that Montoya produced each footprint individually rather than using a stencil or pre-made form. The artist used five small round drops of black paint to indicate toes and a larger pear-shaped form to create the soles of Six-Deer's feet. The four unevenly spaced footprints follow in a straight line from right to left and Six-Deer initiates this movement with her left foot. Montoya superimposes Six-Deer's footprints over the bottom of a black and white image of three seated figures from the *Dresden Codex*. These three figures consist of simple line drawings that contrast sharply with the solid photographic image of Six-Deer. They recede into the picture plane, not only because of their linear quality, but also because they have begun to fade with time. The child may be reaching out to these figures or, because she seems not recognize them, Montoya may intend to implicate their power and influence on this panel's events by their literal and figurative presence in the "background."

When the four footprints end, Montoya placed a slightly larger color image of Six-Deer, again in three-quarter profile. In this somewhat larger image, we discern the child's hair treatment and costume to a greater degree. She wears her black hair braided and tied to the top and back of her head, with scarlet and blue strips of cloth woven among the braids. Montoya's niece portrays Six-Deer and the young girl's skin is a rich cinnamon brown hue. In the initial images, the viewer cannot determine the color of Six-Deer's eyes because of the side view, but we see her clothing in detail again from the left-hand side. She wears a two-piece garment of presumably white cotton with richly embroidered panels above each garment's hem. The multi-colored panels consist of black and yellow designs on a scarlet background woven in sequential horizontal bands. Patricia Rieff Anawalt describes a garment similar to that worn by Six-Deer.

> The Aztec (h)uipilli was a closed-sewn, sleeveless tunic or shift that came to a little below the hips or the top of the thighs. It was the basic woman's upper-body garment, and as such was worn by women of all classes. The huipilli often had a specially decorated rectangle over the chest that may have served the practical purpose of strengthening the neck slit and protecting it from tearing.[156]

Anawalt recounts a first-hand post-Conquest account by Fray Diego Durán that states, in addition to detailed colored embroidery, fur and feathers of various species

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[156] Patricia Rieff Anawalt, *Indian Clothing before Cortés: Mesoamerican Costumes from the Codices* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1981), 52.

of animals and birds often decorated women's huipillis. Although Six-Deer's garment does not appear to contain either fur or feathers, it has an embroidered design at the neckline. This design takes the form of a pyramid or triangle rather than the rectangular shape found in Central Mexican codices and features the same colors as the embroidery at the garments' hems.

Below her huipilli, Six-Deer wears a skirt of the same fabric as her top garment. Anawalt describes the traditional Mexica/Aztec female lower garment as follows.

> The women's skirt, the cueitl, was a length of cotton, maguey, yucca, or palm-fiber cloth that was wrapped around the lower body and secured at the waist. It went to mid-calf in length. This skirt was the basic lower-torso garment worn by all Aztec females. In varying degrees of elaboration, it is found associated with menial secular chores as well as solemn rituals. We can assume that the degree of decoration on the body of the garment, and particularly on its border, was a response not only to class and ritual context but also to age.[157]

The child's skirt or *cueitl* appears slightly smaller in circumference than her huipilli, but still wide enough at the bottom for ease of motion. In every depiction of Six-Deer, the generously cut huipilli drapes over her cueitl in loose folds. Six-Deer remains barefoot throughout the codex and wears this costume and hair treatment for the remainder of the journey, except for a slight change in hair style in Panel 5. While

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[157] Ibid., 33.

Montoya does not present how the changing landscape affects Six-Deer, the viewer can imagine Six-Deer's vulnerability to the elements.

In this second representation of Six-Deer, she stands again in left three-quarter profile. She holds her body erect although her head inclines slightly downward. We see her left foot, a few bare toes just visible below the luxuriant hem of her cueitl. She extends her right arm in an upward right diagonal, reaching forward without strain. The action reminds me of a gesture of blessing or welcome to someone in the far distance. Her left arm emerges from the upper garment's wide sleeve and she gently clenches her left hand into a relaxed fist as if she were carrying something precious, rather than in a defensive motion.

She looks downward and her gaze appears to rest on a black and white image of the Maya Paddler Gods[158] accompanied by identifying glyphs placed directly above their canoe. Montoya transferred this image to the amate paper base thirteen years ago and it now appears slightly faded. In a humorous and, perhaps ironic, juxtaposition to the left of the Paddler Gods, Montoya places a tiny image of a sailing vessel or brigantine navigated by the Conquistadors. Montoya reproduced the image of the

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[158] Figures from Maya cosmology, Old Paddler God and Old Stingray God, appear in Classic Maya art and frequently transport the Maize God in a canoe. They symbolically represent day and night, come into being during royal bloodletting, and share attributes of gods found at Palenque (Palenque Triad). Their canoe symbolically continues the connection with sacrifice because it resembles containers used to hold sacrificial offerings. Miller and Taube, *An Illustrated Dictionary*, 128-130, Sharer, *The Ancient Maya*, 526-528.

brigantine from the *Florentine Codex*. The Paddler Gods appear significantly grander in size while, due to its small scale, the Spanish ship looks almost toy-like. Throughout the codex, Montoya often uses the "background" to represent important conflicts between the Mesoamerican and European worldviews either symbolically or, as in this panel, with cosmological figures encountering realistic representations of people or objects such as ships.

From the second image, two footsteps trace a slight downward diagonal to the left where Montoya places a third image of Six-Deer, again about the same size as her previous representations. This time in right profile, her fully visible left foot projects outward through space, her small toes angle sharply upward, and she strides buoyantly to the right. Montoya captures the child in the midst of a broad forward step, her small arms swinging in opposition to the movement. Her right foot remains earthbound and the weight of her body rolls through the ball of this foot. Her smile has broadened somewhat and her cheeks reveal the round fullness of youth. However, both her movement and facial expression temporarily belie her internal uncertainty mentioned in the text. She holds her right fist closed, again possibly carrying something, and, with her chin level, she glances straight ahead. From this image, four steps trace a slight convex curve downward to the right and point to a critical image, the conversation between Six-Deer and the character she seeks in this panel, Ix-Chel.

Montoya christened this figure with the name of the Maya moon goddess

mentioned earlier in the formal analysis as the mother of the four Skybearers. This figure enjoys multiple references that I outline briefly. Maya scholar Robert Sharer identifies Ix-Chel as she appears in the *Dresden Codex* as a Rainbow Deity, "Ix" meaning "She" and "Chel" meaning "Rainbow." He also names her as Goddess I according to the Schellhas system. Sharer notes that Ix-Chel is frequently associated with God L, a black war and death deity, the third god in the Palenque Triad, who is also connected to the underworld.[159] Other associations include those favored by Montoya, Ix-Chel as moon goddess of healing, childbirth, divination, and weaving.

The images in this register form two intersecting diagonals slightly offset from center. At the central point where these diagonals intersect, Montoya places the encounter between the child and her spiritual teacher, Ix-Chel. Six-Deer stands before the old woman with a quiet expression. Ix-Chel sits with her lower legs tucked beneath her and gazes slightly upward at the child. Her arms, held at waist-height, reach out to Six-Deer at a small upward diagonal. Her left hand gently grasps Six-Deer's right forearm and reveals a noticeable contrast in skin hue, Ix-Chel's skin is a soft brown about two shades lighter than the girl's. Ix-Chel holds her body erect, her spine gracefully elongated. She smiles slightly and engages Six-Deer with a soft but direct gaze.

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[159] Sharer, *The Ancient Maya*, 535-536.

Ix-Chel wears a less elaborately decorated costume than Six-Deer, a full-length white cotton garment ornamented solely with a small multi-colored band of embroidery just above her knees. Over this simple shift, she wears a poncho that obscures many details of the undergarment, that may resemble Six-Deer's huipilli. The poncho consists of a woven pattern that repeats in vertical panel of six colors. Moving from right to left, the colors appear in recurring groups of maroon or blood red, black, mustard yellow, maroon, white, and a soft medium blue. A wider and more detailed section lies along the poncho's outside border and accents the less ornate vertical color panels. Weavers generally construct ponchos by joining two finished woven sections via a center-sewn seam. Leaving part of the seam open for the wearer's head allows the pattern to repeat uninterrupted. The open areas will not fray because the weaver binds the edges before joining the two panels. The poncho Ix-Chel wears features this center opening and allows the poncho to pass easily over her trenza-wrapped head. The poncho ends in a braided fringe that rests on the ground directly behind Ix-Chel's hips. The old woman wears her graying hair in a similar manner to Six-Deer with braids wrapped along the circumference of her head, tied occasionally in this instance with strips of mustard yellow cloth. A solitary silver earring dangles from her left ear, her head and body in left profile. The sleeve of her garment, unlike Six-Deer's shorter sleeve length, reaches below her elbow midway to her wrist.

In the center of Register 2, the artist identifies the child as Six-Deer by placing

a pictographic name glyph directly to the girl's left and by connecting the glyph with a thin black line, a standard practice in many pre and post-Contact codices (Fig. 2.10). Name glyphs are pictorial representations of people and places and Montoya uses them to identify specific people only in Panels 1 and 3. As stated in Chapter 1, Montoya adopted the visual convention from the Mixtec *Codex Nuttall* to convey some of her characters' names. Montoya appropriated the glyph for 8 Deer Tiger Claw from the *Codex Nuttall*, retained the colored image of the (*mazatl*) deer, reduced its eight small colored circles to six, and completely disregarded the pictorial representation of the tiger claw (Figs. 2.11, 12). Painted in a mustard yellow color with white and black accents, the deer faces to the left in profile. A broad swath of white paint forms the deer's muzzle and the artist uses a heavy contrasting black line for its upper lip. The deer's mouth reveals several white teeth, while a single drop of blood falls from the deer's slightly open jaws. Montoya has placed the small red circles in an upside down "L" shape directly under the deer's neck, a shape that could be mistaken for a collar and leash. She reverses or inverts the arrangement of the circles from the original model. In the pre-Contact *Nuttall,* the eight small circles that create Eight Deer Tiger Claw's name lay in a ninety-degree angle to the left. In Montoya's adaptation, three circles lie horizontally underneath the deer's jaw line and the remaining three circles drop in a vertically perpendicular line. The six red circles represent the numeral "6" and, together with the pictographic deer, they form the

child's name, "Six-Deer." In similar fashion, Montoya identifies Ix-Chel with a two-part glyph and extends a small black painted line between the middle of Ix-Chel's back and the glyph. The glyph consists of two parts: 1) painted in mustard yellow, red, and gray; and 2) a red and yellow medicine bundle that announces the goddesses connection with healing.

From this central image of the child and her teacher, two small footsteps lead in a sharp descending diagonal toward the lower right hand side of the panel where Six-Deer appears alone. In contrast, Montoya placed another image of Six-Deer and Ix-Chel in the left side of the register although no footsteps direct the viewer's attention in that direction. This bottom left image completes the diagonal that descends right to left and organizes half of the panel's visual information. The two images of Six-Deer and Ix-Chel have a similar visual weight and size. By placing this second image of the two characters in the lower left hand corner, Montoya anchors the space of this register with a second key image, Ix-Chel's charge to Six-Deer. The two color images of Six-Deer in the upper left side form the upper portion of the intersecting diagonal that descends from upper left to lower right side. The color image of Six-Deer standing alone in the bottom right completes this second diagonal.

The picture of Six-Deer and Ix-Chel in the bottom left corner forms one of the most significant images in the panel. In this photograph, the wise woman presents the quest to the child and entrusts her with a flint necklace. It crystallizes the moment

when Six-Deer joins her long line of ancestors who have carried this very flint and served as traditional healers of their people. In this image, Six-Deer stands in three-quarter profile with her body turned to the viewer. Her right hand hangs loosely at her side, her right foot in full view at the hem of her garment. A slight shadow appears diagonally behind her right foot indicating the presence of a second foot, although we do not see it. Six-Deer extends her upturned left hand toward Ix-Chel who cradles it with her left hand. Ix-Chel rises to her knees, inclines her head toward Six-Deer, and draws her mouth forward to begin the process of speaking. With her right hand, Ix-Chel places the flint necklace in the palm of Six-Deer's left hand.

To encapsulate the central action of the panel, Montoya placed torn fragments of cream-colored amate with Spanish phrases in two locations. These handwritten red-brown texts appear in the lower third of the panel, directly beneath each other. The first text, approximately three inches long and one inch high, announces Ix-Chel's charge "*Tienes que ir a Aztlán*" (You have to go to Aztlán) (Fig. 2.13). Two inches below, rendered with the same paint, the second text measuring two and one half inches long and varying from one-half to three-quarters of an inch high, contains Six-Deer's reply of "*Tengo miedo*" (I am afraid). The final image of the child alone in the bottom right corner reflects Six-Deer's words. Clasping the flint over her heart with both hands, she pauses, her face full of trepidation. To her right, a few small black footprints show that Six-Deer ultimately moves upward and out of the panel.

***Codex Delilah*, Panel 1, Register 3**

In Register 3 of Panel 1, Montoya inserted a color photograph of the Late Classic Mesoamerican site of Palenque.[160] This register, constituted completely by the photograph, measures three inches high by eleven inches wide. The final three images in the glyph series from Register 2 offset Register 3 to the right by nearly an inch and a half and date the panel 1401. The fold that ends the panel lies approximately one inch to the right of the photograph's edge and the area between the edge and the fold consists of unadorned cream-colored paper. This "white space" frames the register on the far right side, balances the glyph series on the left, and lends visual punch to the color photograph.

In this register, four white stone structures emerge from an intensely green and verdant jungle landscape. Montoya composed the photograph with the Temple of the Cross on the upper left side, while the remaining three structures lie closely together on the right hand side of the composition. The Temple of the Cross rises from the top of the highest hill in the photograph, while the other structures lie among a series of

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[160] Palenque lies in the highlands of Chiapas, the easternmost state of Mexico. The Maya ruler Lord Pacal had the Temple of Inscriptions built to hold his tomb. For more information on Palenque and other Late Classic Maya sites, see Mary Ellen Miller, *The Art of Mesoamerica from Olmec to Aztec*, Revised ed. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1996), 123-161, Jeremy A. Sabloff, *The Cities of Ancient Mexico: Reconstructing a Lost World*, Revised ed. (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1997), 79-82, Linda Schele and Peter Mathews, *The Code of Kings: The Language of Seven Sacred Maya Temples and Tombs* (New York: Scribner, 1998), 95-132, Michel D. Coe, *The Maya*, 6th ed. (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1999), 130-138.

lower crests. From left to right these structures are the Temple of the Foliated Cross, Temple of the Inscriptions, and the Temple of the Sun. These three temples, the Temple of the Cross, the Temple of the Foliated Cross, and the Temple of the Sun form what is known as the Group of the Cross.

***Codex Delilah*, Panel 1, Register 4**

In this register, the mottled amate base contrasts with the computer-generated text printed on the lighter shade of paper and draws attention to the textual description of Six-Deer's predicament. The text identifies Six-Deer and Ix-Chel by name, describes Ix-Chel's face as " a bundle of wrinkles," and relates the conversation that takes place between Ix-Chel and the child. It characterizes Six-Deer's village by evoking its sights, smells, and sounds. Montoya and García-Camarillo describe the "heaviness of the humid afternoon," the "intoxicating" smells of "fruit, fish, and rotting leaves." The viewer understands the depth of Six-Deer's anxiety, when the authors note that she is the only person afoot in the oppressive weight of the afternoon's humidity.

The elements in this panel provide a strong sense of Six-Deer's "genesis" and powerfully evoke the time and physical presence of her world. Montoya imagines a past with mythic, historic, and spiritual dimensions by depicting cosmological figures and existing pre-Contact sites laden with connections to the sacred and the process of transformation. While Six-Deer's village (Palenque) looks majestic and peacefully

nestled amongst jungle growth, Montoya communicates an underlying sense of disquiet initiated by the Bacabs in the first register and carried through the remaining registers by various means. While we understand Bacabs's axes as symbolic representations of lightning, on another level, we read them as weapons, especially because of their raised position, and their pose indicates a burgeoning conflict. The meeting of the Paddler Gods with the Spanish brigantine foreshadows disastrous events in Panel 2. Finally, Montoya's physical portrayal of the child increases the sense of disquiet because Six-Deer appears uncertain and lacking in personal power demonstrated by the scale of her representations and in her guarded expression and often hesitant and circumscribed motion.

***Codex Delilah*, Panel 2, Register 1**

In the second panel of *Codex Delilah*, Montoya presents the Bacabs in a different sequence than Panel 1 and painted these figures, from left to right, predominantly black, red, white, and then, mustard yellow. Three of the four Bacabs clasp axes in their left hands, while the first Bacab, Black Bacab, appears without a weapon. The second figure (Red Bacab) and final figure (Yellow Bacab) hold their weapons in an upright position in front of their bodies. In contrast, the third Bacab or White Bacab holds his weapon raised at a ninety-degree angle behind his back and this Bacab repeats the pose of the third Bacab (Yellow) in the previous panel. Slight differences exist between the Bacabs's representations in these Panels 1 and 2, but

generally, the deity figures express an increasing imbalance that escalates incrementally in each successive panel.

***Codex Delilah*, Panel 2, Register 2**

In the second register of this panel, Montoya continues to present Maya imagery but also expands geographically to include symbolic references to Central Mexico. In the foreground of this register, Six-Deer encounters a "Wailing Woman" in various poses of shock and grief. In this character, the artist conflates the legendary figure of La Llorona with the historical figure of La Malinche, merging both in one character now named Llora-Llora-Malinche.[161] Indicating both pre and post-Contact periods, this character combines Maya and Central Mexican references as well. Malintzin Tenépal, also known as La Malinche and Doña Marina, was a Maya woman of noble rank who served as Hernán Cortés's translator. She straddles both pre and post-Contact periods and travels from the Maya area to Central Mexico as part of Cortés's campaign of conquest. In contrast, Rafaela Castro locates the mythic figure of La Llorona within Mexica/Aztec tradition of Central Mexico where the figure first appears post-Conquest, although scholars debate her exact origin.[162] An imaginary figure of folklore, La Llorona has long hair, wears a white dress, travels only at night

[161] In the discussion of each panel, I first provide the entire name of the character invented by Montoya and García-Camarillo. For ease of use, I generally abbreviate the name to a single portion of the compound name in further references.
[162] Rafaela G. Castro, *Chicano Folklore: A Guide to the Folktales, Traditions, Rituals and Religious Practices of Mexican-Americans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 140-142.

generally near bodies of water, and howls, "Ayyy, mis hijos (Oh, my children)." Positioned somewhat like the European-American "boogeyman," parents often use her a means of social control and warn their children to behave, otherwise La Llorona will come and take them. The post-Conquest version of La Llorona describes her as an indigenous woman married to (or in love with) a Spanish Conquistador and the couple has three children. When the Conquistador leaves La Llorona for a Spanish woman, La Llorona drowns their children in a nearby river. Overcome with remorse, she loses touch with reality, and wanders forever searching and crying out for her dead children. Ten years before the arrival of the Spanish, Mexica/Aztec accounts record the appearance of several inauspicious omens, including a woman heard crying out night after night. Some accounts link La Llorona to this omen stated as:

> The sixth bad omen: The people heard a weeping woman night after night. She passed by in the middle of the night, wailing and crying out in a loud voice: "My children, we must flee far away from this city!" At other times she cried: "My children, where shall I take you?" [163]

Montoya uses the Sixth Portent as recorded by Spanish missionary Bernardino de Sahagún to shape her portrayal of Llora. This character functions as harbinger of disaster when she announces the conquest to Six-Deer. Montoya has stated that Llora

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[163] Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex: General History of the Things of New Spain, Vol. 12: The Conquest of Mexico*, trans. Arthur J. O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble, 2nd, Revised ed. (Santa Fe: School of American Research, 1975), 1.

"represents catastrophic destruction" and that the Central Mexican earth goddess *Cihuacoátl* (Woman-Snake) from the Post-Classic period serves as an antecedent of Llorona.[164] Further, this goddess continues the theme of healing that Montoya weaves throughout the codex because Cihuacoátl has an association with healing as the goddess of midwifery.

Chicana recovery and revision[165] of figures from history, literature, and oral tradition developed from the earliest days of El Movimiento. Montoya continued this "new" tradition and most directly demonstrated the degree to which she strove to recuperate and reclaim the figure of Malinche when she chose her daughter to portray this character.[166] To communicate the grief-stricken state of this character, Montoya had her daughter close her eyes during the photography session and applied another set of eyes on the young woman's eyelids with make-up. Montoya's daughter acted out Lora's terror, fear, and pain with "wild-eyed" abandon for her mother's lens.[167] In a comment that supports the artist's reclamation and revision, later in Register 4 of this panel Montoya and García-Camarillo have Lora ask Six-Deer whether she has seen any children in the vicinity. I suggest that Lora inquires about the welfare of children

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[164] I have taken this quote from material written and made available to me by the artist.
[165] For an account of Chicana revisions of La Llorona in literature, see Tey Diana Rebolledo, "From Coatlicue to La Llorona: Literary Myths and Archetypes," in *Women Singing in the Snow: A Cultural Analysis of Chicana Literature* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1995).
[166] I provide a detailed analysis of Montoya's reclamation of "Malinche" in Chapter 4.
[167] Delilah Montoya, interview by the author, digital audio recording, Houston, Texas, 13 March 2004.

in a broad sense, not just her own, and in this way may represent mothers throughout time who have lost their children.

In one of the most visually dense panels of the codex, Montoya transferred color photographs and appropriated images from post-Conquest codices to create a scene of utter chaos and heart-wrenching pain (Fig 2.14). She organized the composition of the second panel along a diagonal that moved from the upper right to lower left. Along this diagonal, she placed color images of Six-Deer and black and white images of Lora. She further emphasized the diagonal with the parallel pattern of Six-Deer's footprints. Lora wears a simple white shift, her arms and feet uncovered. Her thick and curly dark hair swirls above her slender shoulders. In three representations, Lora literally dances her grief, her body twisted in motion, and her face contorted by screams. She raises her arms, clenches her head, and tears out her hair. Montoya applied heavy strokes of red and white paint to the images of Lora produced from transfers of photographs and rendered initially in black and white. These additional wildly daubed accents of paint increase the sense of frenzied motion. Confused and overwhelmed, Six-Deer appears in two places, in the lower left and upper right corners at the zenith and nadir of the organizing diagonal. In the lower left corner, she stands with her small hands pressed over her mouth, a field of disturbing background images surround her, and she gazes at a nearby image of Lora who cries out for her children. In the upper right, she stands again, but his time glances down at

her small body rather than into the fray. Both hands cup her belly, her face and shoulders folded over in an arcing motion. The turquoise beads and flint lie along the front of her body.

In the background, Montoya reproduced numerous pictures taken from post-conquest codices that illustrate the conquest and its aftermath. Images of murder, torture, and suffering constitute the majority of this panel's pictures. These "background" images interact with larger and more prominent color depictions of Llora and Six-Deer and serve as visual "subtext." Further, the artist includes them to show what Six-Deer passes through as she travels from the eastern coast of Quiahuítzlan to the center of Mexico and this section of the journey replicates Cortés's march from the Gulf Coast to Tenochtitlán. In the center of the register, the artist appropriated an image from the *Florentine Codex* that she found in *The Broken Spears* and placed this line drawing between two painted covered images of Llora. In this drawing, a woman lies on a woven mat (Figs. 2.15, 16). She is without clothing and a blanket or cloth of some kind covers most of her body. Her head, right arm, and upper chest emerge from the blanket, while her arm rests on the woven mat at a ninety-degree angle to her body. Her right leg repeats this angle. Although a rectangular form supports her head, her awkward body placement creates a sense of physical discomfort. The visible part of her body contains repeated "popcorn-like" dots or shapes that become intelligible only when the viewer realizes the woman suffers from

smallpox. The drawing reflects the grotesque disfigurement of the disease, the woman's skin thickly covered with smallpox pustules. In his post-Conquest work, Sahagún's recorded eyewitness accounts as follows.

> And even before the Spaniards had risen against us,
> a pestilence first came to be prevalent: the smallpox.
> It was [the month of] *Tepeihuitl* when it began, and it
> spread over the people as great destruction….There was
> great havoc. Very many died of it. They could not walk;
> They only lay in their resting places and beds.[168]

A few inches below, Montoya places another illustration from the *Florentine Codex* reproduced in *The Broken Spears* that also depicts smallpox. In this reproduction, a woman in left profile sits on a woven mat with a support of some kind behind her back. A blanket wraps the majority of the woman's body and the visible portions of her body are laden with smallpox pustules. A second woman sits or kneels to her left, clad in a huipilli that retains the distinctive embroidered area underneath the neckline. Her mouth emits a speech scroll, a small snail-like symbol used in the Mesoamerican artistic tradition to indicate speech. Although no Spanish or Náhuatl gloss relates her words, the way the women's bodies incline toward each other suggests words of solace.

Directly below the two line drawings, Montoya groups four reproduced images that reveal scenes of the torture and murder of indigenous peoples. Six-Deer stands to

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[168] Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, 81.

the left of these events a mute witness. Her hands cover her mouth in an expression of horror and shock while the red outlined word "*¿Porque?* (Why)" trembles directly in front of her face. Slightly below this word in an illustration the artist copied from the *Archives of the Indies*, a conquistador holds a Mexica woman by the hair. The woman kneels under the man's body, her arms outstretched. To her left and connected by a thin line, a name glyph appears that identifies her as a ruler or member of Central Mexican nobility. Although the image does not depict an uplifted sword, the viewer can easily imagine the cutting of the woman's hair used as a strategy to shame or disfigure her. Rather than simply remove her hair, this drawing may alternately imply that the conquistador will decapitate her.

Underneath this image and slightly to the right stands a tall tree with several heavily leafed branches that Montoya took from the *Lienzo de Tlaxcala*, a post-Conquest manuscript (Fig. 2.17). Two indigenous bodies hang from the tree's branches, their arms bound against their bodies with lengths of rope.[169] A line connects each figure to a name glyph. Their sex is indeterminate, but the body on the left has shoulder-length hair while the person on the right has ear-length hair, and this

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[169] Historically, lynching and hanging have formed a major means of control over the physical and psychic safety of Americans of color and colonized peoples throughout the Americas. In a group of important photographs called the *Erased Lynching Series*, Ken Gonzáles-Day documents contemporary locations of past sites of lynching of people of color throughout California. While conducting research for this series, Gonzáles-Day found that ten times more Latinas/os have been lynched in California than African-Americans. For more information, see Jennifer Flores Sternad, "An Interview with Ken Gonzáles-Day," *The Harvard Advocate* (Summer 2004): 31-36.

may indicate the conquistadors' indiscriminate murder of both women and men. In a related scene appropriated from the *Archives of the Indies*, a vertical series of stocks lays to the immediate right of the tree and confines four indigenous people. They sit upright, their legs stiffly in front of their bodies, imprisoned by the stocks. Immediately above the image of the stocks, a mastiff charges an indigenous man. The dog has its mouth open and leaps forward to grasp him by the throat, while a nearby conquistador holds a slack chain in his hands connected to the indigenous prisoner. Montoya reproduced this image from the *Coyoacan Codex*, a post-contact Central Mexican work entitled "*Manuscrito del aperreamiento*" or "Savaging-dog manuscript"[170] and the *Codex Vaticanus A* also contains this image.

In addition to the reproduced and painted pictures of Llora, the artist placed three fully painted images in the second register of this panel. They consist of eight date glyphs placed vertically on the lower right hand side, a single half moon shape in the extreme upper left hand side, and six separate instances of Spanish phrases or individual words scattered throughout the panel. The glyphs date the page as 1521, the year that Hernán Cortés conquered Mexico. Montoya painted each glyph with several colors, mustard yellow, brick red, medium blue, gray, and earth brown, and emphasized certain sections of the glyphs with thin black lines. The half moon shape

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[170] For a more detailed description of these events, their context within the Conquest, and an illustrated account from the *Coyoacan Codex*, see Brotherston, *Painted Books from Mexico*, 33-35.

lies directly underneath the twine "stitch" that comes from behind the book cover. As in all the panels of the codex, the "stitches" appear in the second register on the extreme right and left-hand sides. Since Montoya added the book covers after creating the codex, she probably planned that the twine in this panel would appear directly superior to the half moon image. The artist uses an image found on Folio 87 from the *Ríos* codex, a copy of a Central Mexican pre-Contact work with Italian glosses sometimes referred to as a "Huitzilopóchtli Manuscript."[171] She outlines the half circle in mustard yellow paint, with the interior of the half-circle a midnight blue. Two white stars lie on either side of the interior and a line-drawn figure darts forward at a forty-five degree angle from the center. The figure resembles a feathered serpent, its attenuated body drawn with delicate black lines. A flame-lie protuberance emerges from its mouth and overlaps the edge of a piece of torn paper.

Montoya included seven instances of handwritten Spanish words or phrases throughout this panel and placed a glyph panel on the right side that dates the panel's events, 1521. Described from top to bottom the words and phrases call out; 1) "Los conquistadores matan (The conquistadores murder)," 2) "*mis hijos* (my children)," 3) "hijos (children)," 4) "*niños* (babies)," 5) "*matan* (they murder)," 6) "mis hijos" (my children)," and 7) "¿Porque? (Why?)." In each instance, the artist painted the letters in

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[171] Ibid., 47.

red with a double outline. The physical replication or layering of the words "mis hijos" (and others) upon each other emphasizes their spoken quality or orality and produces a "visual" echo. The doubling of the text creates a sense of depth or dimension that allows a kinesthetic viewer to feel the vibration of the words in space and the curved structure of the words increases the sense of movement. "Los conquistadores matan" forms the single notable exception, where Montoya used brown gouache and rendered the words in a solitary line. For this important phrase, one that announces the main action of this panel, Montoya attached a single torn piece of paper in the uppermost area of this panel just slightly left of center. This piece of paper measures three and one half inches wide and varies in height from two to two and one half inches. In an important comment, Montoya lays part of the feathered serpent's body and its fiery emanation over the left-hand side of this torn paper. The artist interspersed these words throughout the panel, generally next to the figures of Llora or Six-Deer to indicate who is speaking. In contrast to other Spanish text found later in the codex, Montoya's treatment of the words emphasizes intense emotion. The double outline of each letter visually represents the vibrations of sound waves through space and suggests the timbre of Llora's screams, piercing cries that echo and reverberate throughout and beyond the panel.[172]

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[172] I suggest further context for these cries in Chapter 4 of the dissertation.

***Codex Delilah*, Panel 2, Register 3**

The color photograph in Register 3 of Panel 2 represents the jungle coastline that Six-Deer travels. Dark green areas of foliage compose the background and just a small slice of light blue sky appears above this dense flora. The tree-lined background comprises the upper section of the photograph's picture plane, while a wide swath of inviting blue water makes up its lower half. In the center foreground, Montoya conjures the smells and sounds of this coastal terrain by picturing a pair of exquisitely pink flamingos winging over azure water. The two birds soar across the space with their elongated necks and slender legs extended in long lean lines parallel to the water. Their underbellies consist of patches of pink and white feathers and their wings' graceful arc ends in black tipped feathers. The tranquil scene Montoya portrays contrasts sharply with the disturbing events of the register above. At least temporarily, this portion of Six-Deer's world seems untouched by European contact.

I cannot ascribe a specific meaning to the flamingoes; perhaps Montoya simply used a readily available photograph without intending any further comment other than to indicate tropical climes. Perhaps the most important way to think about the symbolic meaning of these figures is as liminal beings, meaning that they can move from one part of the physical world to another.[173] This point is particularly pertinent to

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[173] Julia Guernsey made this important consideration.

flamingoes because they travel from water (underworld realms) to land (earthly realms) to sky (celestial realms), an important ability replicated by spiritual specialists in dream or trance states. Additionally, Mesoamerican cultures used birds to represent deities, death, or omens. For example, among the *Borgia* codices, thirteen winged creatures called the *Quecholli* appear with specific ritual numbers that indicate positive or negative auguries. Individual characteristics of each bird such as their flight, their territory, and their song embody particular qualities that indicate a particular day's fate. When rendered visually in the ancient codices, the cry of a particular bird represented a day name and its associated advantageous or unfavorable augury.[174] The *Dresden Codex* provides another example of the significance of Mesoamerican bird imagery. Pages seventeen and eighteen record information regarding childbirth and illnesses particular to women and depict birds as symbols or omens of disease. Fortunately, the codex also depicts female goddesses carrying medical pouches with the necessary remedies. Similarly, according to ethnographic reports, some Mayas believe that birds can swoop down and abscond with the souls of babies.[175]

At minimum, I suggest that Montoya uses this particular bird to create a sense

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[174] Brotherston, *Painted Books from Mexico*, 132 and 205.
[175] Robert Redfield, *Chan Kom: A Maya Village* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1934).

of place and to provoke a sensation of a humid, tropical environment. Since Maya worldview did not consider humans separate from or above animals in importance, as in the Western tradition, perhaps the chorus of sounds Montoya and García-Camarillo describe performs a symphony of grief voiced by human and animal world alike. Additionally, the concept of birds causing soul loss reminds us of the death of La Llorona's children as larger symbols of the loss of children's lives (and souls) during the Conquest. Lastly, Montoya may use avian imagery as metaphor for the literal and symbolic illnesses introduced to Mesoamerica by Europeans.

***Codex Delilah*, Panel 2, Register 4**

In the fourth register of the codex, the computer-generated narrative supplies details of Six-Deer's journey that augments the viewer's experience of the artwork. The text consists of four paragraphs in two justified columns of the same size and mentions a place and a person critical to this panel's events. Providing a first hand account of the Conquest, it places Six-Deer at the Isthmus of *Tehuantepec*, the zone of interaction between the Maya and non-Maya areas in southern Mexico. The text names Six-Deer's specific location as Quiahuítzlan*,* the place where Hernán Cortés incited the *Totonac* leaders to rebel against the existing Mexica/Aztec leadership.[176] This action set into motion further resistance to Mexica/Aztec rule that culminated in the

[176] See "The Stay at Cempoala" in Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *The Conquest of New Spain*, trans. J. M. Cohen (New York: Penguin Books, 1988), 107-118.

defeat of *Tenochtitlán* and the establishment of Spanish rule. Montoya and García-Camarillo describe the beauty of the landscape where the "riotous sounds" of coastal birds and jungle animals mingle with the cries of a wailing woman. They describe a woman with "red eyes, waxen face and wild matted hair" who "accosts" Six-Deer and demands, "Did you see any children around here?" Identifying herself as Llora-Llora-Malinche*,* the wailing woman warns the child of approaching disaster.

The text supplies important information about the panel's events difficult to understand from the images alone. Llora tells the child, "All is lost, but I can tell you're carrying the child of the invaders." This comment explains Six-Deer's pose in the upper right-hand side of Register 2 where the child glances downward and places both hands on her belly. The red outlined text "niños" (babies) vibrates ominously to the left. In later panels of the codex, a visual or textual account of Six-Deer's pregnancy never appears, a puzzling omission. I suggest that Montoya includes the pregnancy to illustrate a major ramification of European contact, the creation of the mestiza/o, and I provide an in-depth reading of this issue later in the dissertation. In this register, Llora tell Six-Deer that "men in metal clothes…rape the women, and disease follows them everywhere." Lora's statement that Six-Deer becomes pregnant with a child of the "invaders" may imply that the child was sexually assaulted, although Montoya never presents this visually or in the text. In Chapters 3 and 4, I discuss possible readings of this moment. Moreover, I suggest that Montoya uses Six-

Deer's body to symbolically represent these events on an all-encompassing scale rather than to construct a specific part of the larger storyline.

***Codex Delilah*, Panel 3, Register 1**

In the third panel of *Codex Delilah*, Montoya presented the Bacabs in yet another arrangement and marked them with first red, black, yellow, and then white gouache. Each figures holds an object in front of their face. Most of the figures remain seated while the final deity (White Bacab) prepares to stand. From the brown tree stump underneath White Bacab, a new character emerges (Fig. 2.18). Although Montoya entwined this figure with multiple spring-green leaves suggesting birth or new emergence, the figure resembles a skeleton and she considered it *Muerte*, or the figure of Death.[177] In a significant move, the artist disregards the register marker for the first time. The skeletal figure of Death breaks the register and makes contact between "heaven and earth." Crossing the boundary to the other side, Muerte descends into the register below (Register 2) and confronts a line-drawn Conquistador. The Conquistador appears unarmed, significantly smaller than Death, and reaches upward toward the heavens. Muerte reaches downward with its left arm and cups its hand and "boosts" the Conquistador into heaven. Montoya used these two figures to illustrate the inversion and syncretization of myths, spiritual traditions, and religious practices

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[177] Delilah Montoya, conversation with the author, Atlanta, Georgia, 19 February 2005.

that resulted from the Indigenous-European encounter. Montoya wanted to indicate the arrogant attitude of the Conquistadors who, in her view, imbued themselves with god-like stature reflected in this symbolic ascent into the deity zone.[178]

***Codex Delilah*, Panel 3, Register 2**

Six-Deer enters this panel in the upper left-hand side, her head and eyes contemplatively cast downward, while a small brown foot reaches forward into the space. Behind her, and level with the hem of her garment, appears a lone black footprint. Immediately in front of her outstretched right foot, a second footprint appears, this time in red-brown gouache. An observant viewer understands the child's feet bleed. Above the bloody footprint, an orange feathered painted serpent looks into Six-Deer's eyes, its mouth open with its red and blue tongue thrust forward. The serpent has curved back on itself to form a circle and its head moves forward through this opening to form a twisted knot (Fig 2.19). Above these elements, a group of people in a transferred black and white image glances downward upon the child who appears unaware of them and her knotted serpentine companion. This image has faded considerably with time and some of its sections are unreadable. I base some of the following comments on Montoya's initial photographs of the work, rather than on the work in its present condition. The people stand closely together and include a cleric, a

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[178] Ibid.

king, and two or more royal guards. The cleric does not have a bishop's miter or staff, but the robe's neckline has a luxurious fullness that indicates prosperity and elevated rank. The cleric's head appears bald in the center, somewhat like a monk's tonsure, and suggests a Franciscan or Dominican monk or priest, Catholic missionary orders prevalent in *Nueva España* (New Spain). The king, unmistakable in his prominent crown and spotted fur-trimmed cloak, stands behind the cleric, reaches in front of him, and unfurls a proclamation. The cleric is slighter in stature than the king, stands in the center of the picture and the proclamation falls down the center of his body. Directly behind these two figures, guards stand at attention with lances held in precise verticals and their bodies encased in courtly robes and armored headgear. The cleric looks in the direction of Six-Deer and the serpent, with a rather unpleasant expression on his face that simultaneously suggests haughtiness, menace, and disdain.

I begin with this description to indicate the complex nature of the references Montoya makes in this register. Dated 1531, ten years after the conquest of what became New Spain and still later Mexico and the year that the Virgin of Guadalupe appears to Juan Diego on Tepeyac Hill, the register demonstrates the syncretization process that begins immediately with the commencement of Spanish rule. The artist followed her established pattern of combining images created through various processes including those transferred through a heat or solvent process, those painted with gouache, and those formed or augmented with pieces of color photographs. The

mix of material and media echoes the mixture of cultures and grafting of values that occurs during this period. The Virgin of Guadalupe symbolizes the fusion of indigenous and Spanish religious traditions and, as such, records another form of conquest, a spiritual conquest. During the colonial period, the indigenous earth goddess *Tonantzin* became subsumed under the European figure of Mary.

According to the text in the bottom register of this panel as Six-Deer moves further into the middle zone, a woman appears to her in a flash of lighting. Montoya placed one of the most beautifully crafted images of the codex in the center of this panel, a portrait of Lupe-Lupita, Montoya's representation of the Virgin of Guadalupe (Fig. 2.20). For the centrally placed and largest representation of this character, Montoya used a mix of materials and processes that echo the syncretization process of the colonial period. The artist selectively removed Lupe's praying hands and gentle smiling face from a color photograph, inserted them into the amate base, and painted the remainder of the portrait. Montoya followed a rather standard portrayal of the Virgin. She clad Lupe in a red full-length gown with painted gold accents, covered her with a blue mantle encrusted with stars, and surrounded her with a multi-colored mandorla. A small dark-haired painted angel holds up the entire image, while Lupe stands on a crescent moon. Near Lupe's feet, two flower-filled vases cover small sections of her mandorla.

In the lower left-hand side of the panel, Lupe kneels in front of Six-Deer and

extends both hands toward the child's bleeding feet. In this smaller image of the worker of miracles, the artist placed three white vases filled with yellow, red, and white roses over the lower right side of Lupe's folded form. Montoya, during an earlier trip to the Post-Classic Mesoamerican site of Chichén Itzá, photographed a statue of the Virgen of Guadalupe in the town's bus station. These three flower-filled vases stood on the surrounding altar. Montoya removed the vase-bound flowers from their original color photograph and adhered them to the codex's surface, super-imposing them on either side of Lupe's central painted image and also over the lower left side of her kneeling form in the bottom corner. Although Montoya may have assembled this image *estilo rasquache* (rasquache style)[179] and simply used the materials and images of flowers she had on hand when she constructed the codex, the act of layering points to a larger issue present in the work. Montoya pieced the codex together by assembling pieces torn paper, fragments of photographs, bits of plastic; a

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[179] Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, "Rasquachismo: A Chicano Sensibility," in *Chicano Art: Resistance and Affirmation, 1965-1985*, ed. Richard Griswold del Castillo, Teresa McKenna, and Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano (Los Angeles: Wight Art Gallery, University of California, Los Angeles, 1991), 155-162. Ybarra-Frausto has defined estilo rasquache as a "compendium of coping strategies," a manner of living from one day to the next using the materials at hand to keep body and soul together. Rasquachismo comes from the stance of worldview of an underdog and values both flexibility and beauty. Ybarra-Frausto states that artists who create from this perspective favor bright colors, elaborate presentations, and a bold mix of patterns. A final important aspect if a rasquache sensibility includes an awareness of the transitory nature of lie, often included in the artist's choice of ephemeral material of presentation venue, such as temporary altars. I use the reference here to suggest Montoya's probable use of material and resources she had readily available or *hacer rendir las cosas.* Please also see Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, "The Chicano Movement/The Movement of Chicano Art," in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Display*, ed. Evan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1991), 133-134.

material process of production that paralleled the piecing together of fragmented and faded American histories.

In this second and slightly smaller image of Lupe, the artist again surrounded the Virgin with an exquisitely painted mandorla, outlined with a golden border. Six-Deer, thoroughly exhausted from her journey sits comfortably on a dark circular shape (the rock indicated in the text) and extends her right foot toward the woman healer. Ironically, Montoya "cast" and photographed a local midwife in the role of Lupe. While reclining on the rock, Six-Deer bends her right arm at the elbow with her left hand closed in a fist at waist level and the turquoise necklace that holds her flint hangs loosely around her neck. Lupe, again supported by a tiny angel, glances at Six-Deer' feet. Montoya again identified Six-Deer with her name glyph of the deer and six round red circles, placed to the child's right just outside the generous folds of her huipilli that cascade over the expanse of the rock. Montoya visually emphasized the theme of this panel, "the old ways continue under the new," when she placed the same name glyph used to identify Ix-Chel in Panel 1 above the mandorla that surrounds Lupe. With this important move, the artist equated Ix-Chel with the Virgin of Guadalupe, implied the interchangeable nature of their spiritual power, and demonstrated continuity between the two figures. Montoya considered Lupe as a "manifestation of Ix-Chel and the female aspect of Ometeótl." Lupe's power manifests itself when Six-Deer's footprints once again resume their black imprint across the center of the panel and beyond its

edge.

Some elements of Six-Deer's journey parallel Christ's Passion and suffering. The use of blood in this register may have various symbolic meanings. It may refer to the Passion of Christ, specifically the wounds His feet received during the Crucifixion. It may also imply daily blood sacrifice offered throughout Mesoamerica to sustain life and a harmonious balance of the universe. These sacrifices repeated and honored the initial sacrifice of the blood given by the gods during the creation of humans. Perhaps Six-Deer's blood, understood as sacred fluid (*itz*) nourishes the earth as she enters the panel.

Those lucky enough to view the codex in 1992 must have reveled in Montoya's sense of humor. Upon close inspection, the viewer notices tiny square objects placed at even intervals around the exterior edge of both representations of Lupe's mandorla, some a pale green, others red, and still others yellow. These small pieces of plastic came from a musical card that lit up and rang out a particular sound. Montoya disassembled the card, removed its components, and reconfigured them as part of Lupe's radiant corona. She inserted these multi-colored bits of plastic into the amate base and, until the battery wore out, they illuminated Lupe with alternating bursts of light while the musical component "chimed."[180]

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[180] Delilah Montoya, Telephone conversation with the author, 17 October 2001.

Two text fragments relate Lupe's central message, the primary lesson the child's newest teacher imparts. To the right of the central image of Lupe, a brown handwritten phrase declares, "Las tradiciones viven (The traditions live)." Montoya placed a second image of Six-Deer nearby and her enthusiastic response, "¡Que Bueno! (How Great)," appears immediately underneath. In addition to healing Six-Deer's feet, Lupe provides a means for the child to continue her journey, absorb her "new world order," and yet retain her connection to past knowledge. Montoya included another reference to the continuation of the old ways underneath new traditions. Unbeknownst to Six-Deer, a figure from the ancient past supports her in this panel. Montoya placed the serpentine being that first approaches Six-Deer in the upper left of the panel and imagined this entity whispering to the child, "Don't be afraid. I'm still here."[181]

***Codex Delilah*, Panel 3, Register 3**

In this panel, Montoya inserted a color photograph of a craggy, mountainous landscape in soft tones of lavender, periwinkle, and pale blue. As in other panels, thin rectangular dark brown amate paper strips frame the register on the top and bottom. The glyph sequence on the left side offsets the photograph a few inches to the right. The shape of the mountain ranges imitates the curves of the female body and makes up

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[181] Delilah Montoya, conversation with the author, Atlanta, Georgia, 19 February 2005.

the middle and far distance of the photograph. The few trees that grace the rocky peaks indicate extreme elevation. A green valley appears in the immediate foreground very near the dark amate strip that separates this register from the text. A solitary flowering branch of a shrub or plant stands on the left hand side of the photograph close to Montoya's lens, its small petals blossoming in hues that range from pale lavender to deep purple. Because of Montoya's use of extreme depth of field, the small flowering stalk appears taller than the mountains in the background. With this photograph, the artist gives the viewer a glimpse into the "high terrain" that Six-Deer has journeyed through. These mountain ranges may be higher than that of Tepeyac, the implied site where Six-Deer meets Lupe, but may help the viewer understand why Mesoamericans personified their physical world. The imposing power of the landscape with its graceful curves and pristine beauty underscores the Mesoamerican understanding of mountains, hills, and raised areas as dwellings for deities and spiritual forces.

***Codex Delilah*, Panel 3, Register 4**

Beginning with this panel and continuing into Panels 4 and 5, Montoya used the chocolate amate paper to frame the inset computer-generated text. The black book cover found behind this panel serves as another layer to frame the work and intensifies the stark contrast between the pale and dark amate papers. As before, the twine stitches appear above the text inset and increase the texture of the background. The

text indicates that Six-Deer has reached an exhausted state. In case the viewer does not perceive the change in footprint color in the second register or understand its significance, the text states that her feet "bleed profusely" and that she is weak from "loss of blood."

Montoya and García-Camarillo's wit shines in this textual section of the codex. The first bolt of lightning strikes in front of Six-Deer and leaves her momentarily blinded. Concerned, the "dark" woman inquires after the child, with a friendly "Are you all right?" The child replies, "Not quite…I'm still seeing some light around your body." Viewers who saw the codex when it was first exhibited experienced Lupe's "luminous" quality mentioned by Montoya and García-Camarillo. The text helps us, those who view the codex now, imagine the glow that originally surrounded Montoya's representation of the Virgin of Guadalupe.

The text describes actions not explicit in the visual images and emphasizes the senses of smell, sound, sight, and touch more than any other panel. Montoya and García-Camarillo repeatedly refer to the sense of touch in the text. In order to heal Six-Deer's feet, Lupe-Lupita "caresses Six-Deer's wounds." Later, when Six-Deer thanks Lupe for healing her feet, the child "touches" Lupe's hands. Finally, Six-Deer "hears and smells the lightning strike close to her" as Lupe-Lupita disappears.

***Codex Delilah*, Panel 4, Register 1**

In this register, the Bacabs appear in a sequence of yellow, black, white, and

red. One of the deity figures sits, while two others crouch. A single figure on the extreme right side of this register, Red Bacab, stands for the first time. Like Panel 3, the final figure (Red Bacab) breaks the register and makes contact with a Conquistador below. In an unprecedented move, Red Bacab thrusts a lance toward the armor-clad Spanish soldier. In contrast to the unarmed soldier form the previous panel, this Conquistador has sheathed sword attached to his belt and defensively holds a metal shield in front of his body. Montoya uses these two figures in the deity zone to parallel the events represented in this panel's middle register. In the rest of the panel, Montoya refers to the Pueblo Revolt where indigenous people of today's New Mexico rebelled against Spanish "settlers" and forced them out of this territory. Just as the Pueblos "kicked" the Spanish out of the "Land of Enchantment," Red Bacab "knocks" the Conquistador out of "heaven," realizing that the Spanish are not gods (Fig. 2.21).

***Codex Delilah*, Panel 4, Register 2**

In the fourth panel, dated 1687, Montoya portrays a physical and spiritual conquest that links lost territory and the dislocation of indigenous peoples when she illustrates the figure of *La Conquistadora,* the Virgin of the Conquest. Don Juan de Oñate led one of the first waves of incursion into the northern frontier of Nueva España (New Spain) in 1598. When establishing a Spanish settlement that would become Santa Fe, New Mexico, the Oñate group attacked and displaced the existing Pueblan peoples. Fray Alonso de Benavides brought a statue of the Virgin Mary to

Santa Fe in 1625, known at that time as Our Lady of the Assumption, and this Virgin later reemerged as Our Lady of the Conquest or La Conquistadora.[182] In 1680, the Pueblans revolted against Spanish occupation and the intruders fled back as far as Ciudad Juárez, Mexico (or El Paso, Texas). When they retreated, they took the statue of La Conquistadora with them. Twelve years later (1692) in what is known as the "Reconquest," Don Diego de Vargas Zapata Luján Ponce de León reclaimed the Pueblan areas with the image of La Conquistadora emblazoned on his army's standard bearers. The returning Spanish settled quickly on lands rightfully belonging to others and used their Conquering Virgin to justify the torture of the "reconquered" Pueblans while simultaneously attempting to reclaim their souls.

Montoya organized the space in this register with three images of her version of this figure, the character Adora-La Conquistadora, and three images of Six-Deer. While Montoya included an equal number of pictures of both characters, Adora's visual weight and power starkly contrasts with Six-Deer's presentation. The artist arranged the space with Adora as the focal point of the register and placed a large-scale picture of her in the center of the panel. Montoya added two additional images of Adora to the immediate right and left of this overwhelming central image. The three very small images of Six-Deer form a shallow semi-circle below Adora. In each of

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[182] Fray Angélico Chávez, *La Conquistadora: The Autobiography of an Ancient Statue* (Santa Fe: Sunstone Press, 1975), 54.

these representations of Six-Deer, the child gazes intently at Adora. The balance and position of the figures creates a sense of counter-clockwise motion, a maelstrom with Adora as its centrifuge.

Montoya reinforced the sense of counter-clockwise movement by the formal composition of the register. In a rare move, Montoya incorporated the register below, Register 3, almost as if it were an integral part of this composition. She separated the panels of initial series glyphs into two columns of four glyphs each, an organizational device Montoya used only in this panel. The glyphs stand on either side of the inserted photograph or "place glyph" in Register 3. The end pieces of the glyphs, when combined with the dark amate strips that form the register boundary, create a sideways "I" shape, a form reminiscent of the Mesoamerica ball court or a Doric column. This form supports and directs the viewer's attention to the circular movement above. Six-Deer's footprints also aid the sense of motion because they connect the three images of the child and help plot the shallow diagonal underneath Adora.

Montoya's treatment of the glyph series may reflect the position of this panel within the codex as a whole. Panel 4 falls in the middle of the work, with the first three panels on the left and the final three panels to the right. The artist may have split the glyphs in two columns to visually balance both the composition of this panel and the composition as an entirety. However, Montoya did not intentionally include the figure of La Conquistadora in the work's center as a thematic or symbolic device.

Instead, this controversial figure claims this pivotal space merely by default.

In the center of the register, an extremely large-scale color image of Adora dominates the space (Fig. 2.22). Dressed in elegant and richly appointed clothes, Adora stands majestically and gazes directly at the viewer with a slightly bemused smile on her light-hued and delicately featured face. She wears a full-length black dress of heavy fabric that lies in rumpled, uneven folds on the ground, its weight and richness conjuring the soft and sensuous luxury of silk velvet. The full skirt of her gown boasts a central panel overlay of black fabric accented in long parallel lines of embroidered gold thread, or perhaps beads. A white linen panel edged with lace rests over the upper bodice. Another piece of lace extends from the upper section of the linen panel to her jaw line. Her dark hair is long, almost waist length, and hangs loosely behind her. Around her neck, she wears a large ornate gold cross on a heavy gold chain. The cross lies at her sternum, directly between her breasts, loudly declaring her mission. Holding her arms in front at waist height, she clasps a rosary in her hands and its crucifix falls in the same parallel lines as the gold accents of her dress. A delicate black lace *mantilla* (head scarf) cascades over her shoulders, anchored to her head with a two-tiered pearl and gold encrusted *corona* (crown).

In an interesting move, Montoya rendered the image with a lavishly labor-intensive process that consisted of several steps. First, she transferred the entire color image through a heat process to the amate base. Then, the artist took a second print of

the original color photographic image, removed certain sections, and attached these colored sections over the exact areas of the transferred image. The image initially appears to the viewer as an entire unit and only reveals its secrets under scrutiny. The portions of the color photograph Montoya adhered over the transferred image include Adora's hair, head, shoulders, arms, hands, rosary, and two side panels of her dress from the waist to hem.

The artist placed a smaller black and white image of Adora on either side of this large central figure to create balance. In the smaller black and white images of Adora that abut her central color image, Montoya paused the woman in the midst of a sudden left turn, a motion that unfurled the fabric of her cape in a defensive, off-putting swirl. In the text below, Montoya described this motion "like the wings of a bird of prey" and likened this character to the Wicked Witch of the West in the film, "The Wizard of Oz."[183] The woman looks directly at the viewer with a serious expression and the abrupt motion indicates her impatience and ill manners textually described in the bottom register. Montoya supports these black and white images of Adora with transferred linear images like those in the previous panels. The

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[183] Delilah Montoya, conversation with the author, Houston, Texas, 13 March 2004. As a child, Montoya and her family repeatedly watched "The Wizard of Oz" on television. After completing *Codex Delilah*, the artist realized the degree to which she had been influenced by popular culture when she recognized the influence of the film's characters in her codex. This bears out scholarship crafted by Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, see Ybarra-Frausto, "The Chicano Movement/The Movement of Chicano Art," 128-150.

background images in this panel have faded over time and are particularly difficult to see. In the upper left hand side a map appears, most likely one that traces the route used either by the first Spaniards who relocated to the northernmost reaches of Nueva España (Colonial New Spain) or it may alternately depict the route taken by Don Juan de Oñate during the Reconquest.

In this panel, Montoya used specific formal elements to present the appearance of the physical triumph of the forces of conquest and Reconquest over indigenous life and culture. She composed the action of the panel so that it literally revolved around Adora. In addition, Red Bacab and the Conquistador directly and violently confront each other in the upper right of the panel. I suggest that Montoya included this image to symbolize the "war" that Adora represents, a direct attack against the worldview of indigenous life and cultures of the Pueblo peoples by the Spanish. Montoya broke the separation between the registers only once more in the previously discussed Panel 3. Further, Montoya adhered the only two handwritten texts to the amate surface and painted them with red-brown gouache. Immediately to the left of the large central image of Adora, the artist visualizes the woman's pronouncement "*La viejo debe morir* (The old ways must die)."

Montoya emphasized this difference in class, race, and power between Six-Deer and Adora throughout the register by contrasting the character's scale and the use of luxurious clothing. In every representation of Six-Deer, she appears about one-

fourth the size of this imperious woman. When directly confronted by Adora and urged to join her Reconquest forces, Six-Deer's small and quavering reply, "¡NO!" appears minute in the lower right side of the panel. Her small barefoot form suddenly seems fragile as she clasps her hands over her face and weeps. However, although Six-Deer's body appears vulnerable, her tiny but emphatic textural "¡NO!" stands against Adora's attempts at erasure and forced conversion.

***Codex Delilah*, Panel 4, Register 3**

In Register 3 of Panel 4, the color photograph Montoya inserted into the cream amate foundation shows a mountain-rimmed horizon in the far distance. The foreground, densely overgrown with miles upon unrelenting miles of scrubby brush and sharply fanged cactus, appears at once equally beautiful and foreboding. Although bracketed by buoyantly full cumulus clouds, the seemingly endless expanse of desert brings home the harsh and often desperate reality of such a journey. On the left side, Montoya accentuated the all-encompassing character of the cactus when she allowed it to spill outside the register's dark amate frame. Here it overlaps part of the glyph panel on the left side and covers portions of the register marker above.

***Codex Delilah*, Panel 4, Register 4**

Montoya and García-Camarillo chart the passage of time and identify Six-Deer's location and her physical state in the opening lines of this register, "Many moons spin by as Six-Deer treks the great Chihuahua desert. The wind-blown dust and

thirst clutching at her throat have made her delirious." This description reinforces the expansiveness of the desert landscape pictured in Register 3 and demonstrates that traveling this territory on foot takes considerable time and physical endurance. In addition to powerfully communicating the desert's overwhelming size and its toll on travelers, the text helps characterize Adora. Perhaps even more than the impervious attitude that Adora performs in pictorial representations, the García-Camarillo's words reveal the intensely critical stance she takes against the child. Adora "snaps" at Six-Deer, rudely declares that the child needs a bath, and immediately launches into a thorough diatribe, disparaging Six-Deer's name, her looks, and her beliefs. When Six-Deer's inquires if Adora is going to Aztlán, Adora replies scornfully that this territory is called New Spain, and tries to convince Six-Deer to change her Indian name to a Christian one, Reza-Rosario. This choice of name emphasizes Adora's missionary objective and recalls the Catholic spiritual practice of saying the *rosario* or rosary. Additionally, the first portion of the suggested name, "Reza," likely refers to the "rezador" or prayer leader, a position of responsibility in the Penitente tradition, sometimes held by women.[184] The girl and Adora also clash when Six-Deer's youthful curiosity prompts her to ask about the light shade of Adora's skin. Six-Deer refers to

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[184] Alberto López Pulido documents the participation of women in the Penitente Brotherhood. Please see Alberto López Pulido, *The Sacred World of the Penitentes* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000), 63-68.

the aristocratic woman as "white," but compares her to a cousin of Six-Deer's who has both Spanish and Indian blood. Like the prideful and prejudiced Hispana she is, Adora takes great offence and snarls indignantly, "Indian blood! Don't be stupid." Montoya's attention to the variation in skin hue between Adora and Six-Deer echoes epidermal variation among Chicanas/os and emerges from the differences in skin color in Montoya's family.[185]

Montoya's and, perhaps especially, García-Camarillo's poetic feel for language asserts itself strongly in the text of this panel. In the text's closing remarks, they describe Six-Deer's tear-strewn face and have her perform an affirmative act that symbolizes her connection to the past, "Six-Deer breathes deeply, rubs her flint, and the stream of tears mixes with the swirling dust to create oddly shaped smudges on the young healer's face." In a significant move, Six-Deer, despite her fatigue, flagging spirit, and the sting of Adora's injurious comments, asserts her views. She "retorts" a confident response to Adora's dig at her name, saying that she is "very happy" with it and "firmly" refuses when Adora urges her to join her mission of (re)conquest.

***Codex Delilah*, Panel 5, Register 1**

For the first time in *Codex Delilah*, all of the deities of the four directions stand erect in the top register. Montoya richly ornaments Yellow, White, Red, and Black

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[185] Delilah Montoya, interview by the author, digital video and digital audio recording, Lockhart, Texas, 26 November 2003.

Bacab with headdresses, ankle bands, and the blue necklaces pictured previously. The Bacabs all face the same direction (left) and appear in the process of walking, factors that heighten the sense of their aggressive intentions. The artist indicates a greater sense of chaos, confusion, and conflict when she provides three of them with lances and the remaining Bacab, with a hafted axe. Further, all of the Bacabs have circular shields attached to their garment at waist-level. All of these elements add to the sense of escalating discord.

***Codex Delilah*, Panel 5, Register 2**

Montoya organized the space in an inverted pyramid shape and accentuated this triangular section with a steep diagonal on the right side of the panel. She formed the diagonal with three images of Six-Deer, two black and white and one color representation. Two transferred black and white photographs of the character Six-Deer meets in this panel, Lucha-Adelucha, form the upper points of the pictorial field and a color image of Lucha creates the nadir of the triangle. In the images at the top, Lucha stands with her hands akimbo but at waist rather than hip-height. Everything about the photographs remains the same, except for the woman's facial expression. In the left photograph, Lucha gazes steadily toward the viewer with a serious but pleasant look. In the photograph on the right, she laughs heartily, her mouth open wide, head thrown back, her chest raised slightly backward. She wears a full skirt that falls just below her knees, it multiple folds accentuating her broad hips. Her feet are clad in dark suede or

leather boots and she plants them wide apart like anchoring roots under her ample body. She wears a loosely fitting blouse with slightly puffed sleeves that end at her elbows and a gathered section of the sleeve that falls below the bicep. Over the blouse, she wears a brace of *bandilleras* (bullets cartridges) that cross her chest and two holstered pistols at her waist. A cord rests at the base of her neck and connects to a barely discernible large-scale straw hat. The hat frames her dark and curly shoulder-length hair. At first or second glance, the hat merges into the background, only recognizable as a separate costume piece when the viewer considers the color photograph below.

Montoya framed the two repeating images of Lucha at the top of the register with images from the great Mexican printmaker, José Guadalupe Posada, known for his political satire of the ruling class during the reign of Mexican President Porfirio Díaz (1876-1911), known as the *Porfiriato*. Piles of skulls and *calaveras* (skeletons) in military uniforms suggest the Mexican Revolutionary Period (1910-1920) and provide a sense of Lucha's milieu and anchor Lucha in visual space (Fig. 2.23). Between these repeating images, Montoya superimposed a piece of torn paper with a text that announces Lucha's call to Six-Deer, "Vámonos pal norte (Let us go to the north)." Montoya renders the Spanish text in brown gouache.

Below this scene, Montoya locates a slightly smaller color photograph of Lucha. In this image, one that encapsulates the central action or decision of the panel,

Lucha extends her right hand to Six-Deer who crouches below her to the left (Fig. 2.24). Lucha's left hand remains at her waist and her upper body bends toward the child. Because this image is in color, we see that her skirt is a soft brown, the blouse a white or pale cream color, and her black boots echo the black leather belt, gun holster, and crisscrossing bands of bullets on her chest. Six-Deer's sits on her haunches, her body a tight round ball. She holds her hands together in front of her face and reaches them slightly forward as if she were blowing on them in an attempt to keep warm. Facing to the right, her body a compact bundle, we do not see much of Six-Deer's face. However, her dark curly hair loosely tumbles down her back, free for the first time from the bonds of cloth-bound braids. By glancing at the river, featured prominently in the third register, and consulting the text from the fourth register, we understand the full impact of Lucha's gesture toward the child. At the end of this panel, Lucha and Six-Deer cross the river hand-in-hand.

Two transferred black and white images of equal size flank the color photograph of Lucha and, while they recede into the background because they have faded slightly, the images balance the visual elements of this section in weight, if not in intensity. In the picture on the woman's left, a grimacing and beady-eyed man scowls at the viewer. His long hair and beard, topped by a high hat festooned with a star-studded hatband, looks like Uncle Sam. Montoya adds white paint to "Uncle Sam's" left eye, a choice that heightens his menacing appearance. In the transferred

image on the right side of Lucha, we see a woman's face in three-quarter profile. She glances downward to the left, her eyes almost closed and her mouth parted. Montoya took this image, *Soldaderas en el estirbo de vagón de ferrocarril en Buenavista, Mexico City*, 1911-1914, the well-known photograph of women on a train from the Casasola Archives,[186] also known as *La Adelita*.[187] As noted previously, the transfer of photocopied images reverses the visual material. In the original photograph, the woman glances to the right while, in Montoya's appropriation, the woman looks to the left. To augment this image further, Montoya overlaid a Spanish text with white paint, "*Yo te sigo* (I will follow you)," to record words spoken by Six-Deer to Lucha.

In the lowest section of this panel, black and white transferred pictures balance two colored photographs of Six-Deer. At the far left, we see a very faded image of two men, one reclines on the ground and the other stands immediately behind him. A circular form that suggests a halo surrounds the standing man's head and recalls the

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[186] For an analysis of the use of photographs from Casasola Archives by Chicanas/os and other artists, please see Victor A. Sorell, "The Photograph as a Source for Visual Artists: Images from the Archivo Casasola in the Works of Mexican and Chicano Artists," in *The World of Agustin Victor Casasola: Mexico, 1900-1938* (Washington, D.C.: Fonda del Sol Visual Arts and Media Center, 1984).

[187] For important scholarship on role of women during the Mexican Revolution and their visual representation, please see Angeles Mendieta Alatorre, *La mujer en la Revolución Mexicana* (México: Biblioteca de Instituto Nacional de Estudios Históricos de la Revolución Mexicana, 1961), Shirlene Ann Soto, *The Mexican Woman: A Study of Her Participation in the Revolution, 1910-1940* (Palo Alto: R & E Research Associates, Inc., 1979), Anna Macías, *Against All Odds: The Feminist Movement in Mexico* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982), Julia Tuñon Pablos, *Women in Mexico: A Past Unveiled*, trans. Alan Hynds (Austin: Institute of Latin American Studies, University of Texas Press, 1987), Elizabeth Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican Military: Myth and History* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), Laura M. Addison, "Photographing the 'Woman Alone': The Performance of Gender in the Mexican Revolution" (Master's Thesis, University of New Mexico, 1999).

stories of St. Christopher, the patron saint of travelers and Juan Soldado, the patron folk saint of immigrants. These images emphasize the danger of crossing the border between Mexico and the United States and implicate calls for heavenly intervention.

Six-Deer reveals her delight in having found a traveling companion in one of the images that forms the steep diagonal on the right side. The child has a face-splitting smile on her face and draws her hands together as if clapping with joy. Immediate above this picture of Six-Deer, two footprints lead to a final small black and white image of the child her striding confidently out of the panel. While the artist does not locate a companion picture of Lucha nearby, we understand from the text that, for a while at least, the child has someone to help her through this important crossing.

***Codex Delilah*, Panel 5, Register 3**

Montoya composed the photograph in this register along a forty-five degree diagonal from bottom right to upper left. On the left, a dusty and rock-strewn hill rises and takes half of the space. A barbwire fence arcs against the side of the hill and a few fence posts parallel the length of the river in the center of the photograph. On the other side of the river, pictured as a small, unperturbed expanse of green water, lays a sandbar framed with leafless trees on the far right background.

***Codex Delilah*, Panel 5, Register 4**

If the viewer did not perceive the significance of the fence and the river in the

"place glyph" of Register 3, the text in this register makes the location of this panel apparent. In the early morning sunlight, Six-Deer "looks towards Ciudad Juárez" and the child "kneels" along the "muddy waters of the Río Bravo." She wears her hair unbraided because she has stopped to wash it, along with her face. The text helps us understand the vast changes in the world that Six-Deer now finds herself, circa 1910, when it mentions that Six-Deer watches the people of Ciudad Juárez wake up and turn on their lights. Six-Deer has entered the twentieth century, where people turn on their electric lights, rather than light morning fires or lamps. Lucha makes another more contemporary reference when she mentions "la migra" or immigration forces at the border. Although Montoya derived the character from the revolutionary period in Mexico, she interwove particularly relevant comments to today's border issues. Lucha's statement, "They've stolen the land, destroyed our traditions and hired the masses as slaves in their fields and factories," conjures the contemporary reality of Maquiladora workers along the US/Mexico border.

Six-Deer reveals her evolving consciousness when she asks, "Who is the real enemy you're fighting?" Lucha warns her of the all-encompassing danger when she says that, at first, her enemies were called "invaders." However, now she names them as "oppressors" and can be found everywhere both in the United States and in Mexico. Six-Deer realizes that in order to "understand the truth" she has to cross the river and directly asks Lucha for help. In the early rays of the rising sun, "Six-Deer and Lucha-

Adelucha hold hands and slowly cross the Rio Bravo."

***Codex Delilah*, Panel 6, Register 1**

The Bacabs in this register are the most diverse of all the panels in the codex. Montoya arranged the Bacabs from left to right as Black, Yellow, White, and Red. In one of the more interesting events in the top registers, Black Bacab, the first in the series, directly accosts another being. The artist painted this entity in a soft baby blue and it sits in a submissive posture similar to those of the captives in the Bonampak murals. Black Bacab stands erect and appears to move forward, a shield in its left hand and a hafted axe raised above the "captive's" head. Yellow Bacab sits on a brown stump and twists its upper body sharply to the right in direct opposition to its lower body. Yellow Bacab engages the viewer with a somewhat unnerving direct glance. Never before has Montoya pictured the Bacabs facing forward. The artist pictures White Bacab walking forward with its arms raised in front of its body, but without any sort of weapon or shield. She presents Red Bacab in a similar fashion, actively striding forward, but in contrast, Red Bacab's left hand holds a hafted axe.

***Codex Delilah*, Panel 6, Register 2**

Montoya organizes the space in this register in a "U" shape that echoes the crests and valleys of the mountain range depicted in Register 3 below (Fig. 2.25). To initiate the upper left section of the semi-circular spatial arrangement, Six-Deer stands in the top left side of the panel immediately above the glyph panel and raises her left

arm in greeting. She has a sweet smile on her face and she grasps her flint in her right hand. Montoya depicts La-Velia, the woman Six-Deer encounters in this panel, in this transferred color image on a diagonal just in front and to the left of the child (Fig 2.23). La-Velia, clad in jeans with white sneakers and a black long-sleeved shirt, returns the gesture with her right hand. Her thick curly hair falls to her shoulders of her slight frame. La-Velia carries a cardboard box in her left hand partially obscured by a torn paper fragment that declares "Si si [sic] puede (It can be done)" (Fig. 2.26). This panel contains the largest amount of torn paper fragments in the codex and they consist of nine pieces of paper attached throughout this register, seven computer-generated and two handwritten in brown paint. Each text reveals part of the conversation between La-Velia and Six-Deer or the shouts from the figures in the background.

Along the bottom of the register, the artist placed two images of Six-Deer, one color and one black and white, and second color picture of La-Velia amidst reversed images of protestors. The first picture of Six-Deer in the bottom left shows the child standing in right profile. She raises her left arm level with her head and clenches her left hand in a fist. Another picture of her appears just a few inches to the right in three-quarter profile with her body opened to the front. This time, Six-Deer turns to the viewer and directly engages our gaze with a broad, bright smile while she clasps her hands together in front of her chest.

As noted previously, the process of transferring of photocopied material reverses the original images and texts and renders the words difficult to read. Montoya used the transfer process in this register to locate La-Velia and Six-Deer within a demonstration in support of migrant workers. The images she reversed show large groups of protestors carrying the UFW flag and placards with various slogans. She arranged the reversed black and white images in a semi-circle that repeats the placement of Six-Deer and La-Velia and echoes the path of Six-Deer's footprints. Next to these two pictures of the child supporting the farm worker cause, Montoya puts the second color image of La-Velia in the center near the bottom of the register. La-Velia, as Chicana activist, wears the same clothes and still holds her cardboard box, that the artist humorously terms La-Velia's "soapbox."[188] The shouts of the protestors surround the woman and the child with "*Ya basta* (It is enough)," "*Viva la raza* (Long live the Mexican race), and "*Huelga* (Strike)" among others. Montoya differentiates between the words yelled by the demonstrators and the conversations between Six-Deer and La-Velia (Fig 2.27). To mark the difference, the artist uses red-brown ink in a handwritten cursive style to record La-Velia's, "*Los chicanos también son indios* (Chicanos are also Indians)" and Six-Deer's prideful "*Como yo* (Like me)." For the protestors' shouts, the artist used a small-scale computer-generated black text.

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[188] Delilah Montoya, interview by the author, Lockhart, Texas, digital audio and digital video recording, 26 November 2003.

Six-Deer's black footprints lead up away from the bottom of the register toward the upper right corner where Montoya put a black and white image of the child. This image has the same size and visual weight as the initial image on the left side of the panel. Six-Deer faces to the right, again in profile, clasps her hands in front near her waist. A lone footprint marks the path she will take. She lifts her chin and strides confidently out of the panel.

***Codex Delilah*, Panel 6, Register 3**

The photograph in the register depicts the southern agricultural landscape of Hatch, New Mexico, the area that produces much of the state's chile. In the far distant center of the photograph, Montoya locates a treeless mountain range framed by a stunning New Mexican sky with puffy white clouds. The mountains and sky make up three-quarters of the photograph. A chile field shown as a thin strip of green fills the lower quarter of the photo of the register and a few small green bushes appear scattered along the edge of the field. A larger tree that forms the only shade grows on the right side of the frame. Although the green strip of field is small, the plants lie in clearly distinguishable rows. Montoya pictures the fields to illustrate the area where Six-Deer and La-Velia travel and to show the site of the chile pickers' strike.

***Codex Delilah*, Panel 6, Register 4**

Montoya and García-Camarillo locate Aztlán, the farm workers' movement, and the construction of Chicana/o identity as central aspects in the dialogue between

La-Velia and Six-Deer in this register. The text relates that Six-Deer walks along a narrow dirt road near the depicted chile field in Register 3. La-Velia, who is also walking, notices the child and calls out to her. Six-Deer asks La-Velia if this is Aztlán, but a smiling La-Velia remains noncommittal and says that some Chicanas like herself think Aztlán is "just a state of mind." La-Velia asks Six-Deer what she is doing in the area and Six-Deer says that she is "on a journey trying to understand truth." The child notices that, like her, La-Velia has dark skin and Six-Deer asks if La-Velia is an "Indian." La-Velia responds, "I guess I am…but we call ourselves Chicanos." When Six-Deer appears puzzled by the term, La-Velia tells her that Chicanas/os are "mestizos who are proud of our indigenous heritage." La-Velia goes on to tell Six-Deer that she works in support of the farm workers, has joined striking chile pickers, and is on the move to join others in a march to Santa Fe that will bring attention to the conditions of migrant/agricultural workers. Six-Deer decides to join La-Velia on her "march for justice" and the two walk toward Albuquerque together as La-Velia instructs the child about one of the central principles of the farm workers' movement, non-violence.

***Codex Delilah*, Panel 7, Register 1**

The disagreement between the four sons of Omecihúatl and Ometeótl explodes in this register when White Bacab overpowers Red Bacab on the deity zone's left side. White Bacab holds a menacing looking weapon in its left hand extended fully behind

its body. The terracotta-colored weapon looks like a double-headed scythe and Montoya accented its sharply toothed edges with brown gouache. Red Bacab lays crumpled below White Bacab. To the left, Black Bacab crouches on a platform and holds in its arms a person resembling a child with an oversized head. A partial section of Yellow Bacab's body follows and it appears as if the Bacab was in the process of moving between worlds, but Montoya may have simply left this figure unfinished, either inadvertently or intentionally. The final element resembles the skeletal or plant figure pictured in Register 1 of Panel 3 rather than the general figure of a Bacab. This white figure sits on a small platform with its knees bent close to its body and its feet rest on the platform below. It raises its right arm in a greeting motion while it holds its ankles with its right hand.

***Codex Delilah*, Panel 7, Register 2**

To illustrate the final stage of Six-Deer's journey, Montoya separated the space into two horizontal sections of equal space. Montoya repeated a reference to the temples of Six-Deer's place of origin in the upper section of this register where a black and white transferred image of a temple almost completely fills this portion of the composition. Montoya overlaid the image of the temple with two transferred color images of Crow-Woman, the person Six-Deer has sought throughout the codex. The artist populated the lower half of the middle zone with repeated image of Crow-Woman and Six-Deer.

In a cinematic presentation, the artist ordered the visual elements of the panel to sequentially illustrate each action Six-Deer takes. Montoya represented the first moment of contact between Crow-Woman and Six-Deer when she superimposed an image of Crow-Woman in the center of the temple steps (Fig. 2.28). In this image, Montoya's cousin, in the role of Crow-Woman, kneels on the earth below the temple covered in a black shroud. She bends at the waist, her head on the ground, and her long, straight, black hair parts in two long sections on either side of her body. Montoya used this moment to reinforce, visually and symbolically, the name and presence of her invented character, Crow-Woman. To associate this character with crows, first, the artist tied several feathers in the woman's hair. Second, in the image of Crow-Woman on the temple steps, the cascading sections of her hair separated in the middle resemble the wings of a bird. Third, painted images of black crows encircle the temple structure on three sides. Those not aloft sit on the building's summit.

Immediately to the right of the shrouded image of Crow-Woman, Montoya transferred another color picture that shows the next sequential event that takes place in this panel. Crow-Woman raises her head and reveals her face, now a horrifying skull, to Six-Deer. A nearby text, placed on a torn fragment of paper below these two images explains Crow-Woman's condition. To the left of Crow-Woman's doubled-over body, we hear her words, "*Estoy muy enferma* (I am very ill)." Along the bottom of the register, the artist put the next two climactic representations that include both

Crow-Woman and the child. On the left, Six-Deer stands in right profile directly in front of the old woman, grasps the flint in her left hand, and extends it toward Crow-Woman who kneels directly in front of the young healer (Fig. 2.29). Crow-Woman, shown in left profile, holds both arms in front of her body to prevent the child from coming closer. Montoya makes Six-Deer's intention clear in a text to the right of this image, "*Yo la curo* (I will cure you)." This image illustrates Six-Deer's realization of her healing ability and Montoya emphasized the child's power in the final image in the panel's right corner. In this color picture, Six-Deer stands facing left and embraces a kneeling Crow-Woman, who leans her body heavily against the child. This action completely obscures the old woman's face and indicates her weakened state.

In an interesting move, Montoya repeated an earlier image of Six-Deer found in Panel 4. This transferred color image shows Six-Deer standing in a back shot with her small hands clasped behind her at waist-level. She stands erect and glances upward. Montoya increased this sense of upward motion by breaking the register between Panel 2 and Panel 3. She cut out Six-Deer's form and attached it to both registers so the lower section of Six-Deer's body stands in the sky above the Sandía Mountains. Six-Deer floats between these two registers and appears to be looking at the temple structure at the top of the register. Montoya used Six-Deer's body to literally connect the images of the mountains with the temple as a symbolic means to illustrate the Mesoamerican conflation of temple with mountain as sacred container.

Many Mesoamerican cultures believed that deities lived inside mountains, especially those connected with rain and agriculture fertility. Further, temples and other architectural forms replicated the sacred landscape and continually surrounded Mesoamerican peoples simultaneously with a spiritual connection to their physical and natural environments.

***Codex Delilah*, Panel 7, Register 3**

The photograph in this panel shows a craggy, snow-covered mountain range in soft tones of blue and lavender. The mountain range and sky comprise half of the visual space while scrubby, dry, winter fields constitute the lower half of the image. The lower part of the mountains are treeless, dark, and do not have snow. Montoya captured a particular moment when the sun emerged between the clouds and illuminated only the top section of the Sandías. In the photograph, the sunlight selectively shines on the highest portions of the mountains. In the text from Register 4 of the previous panel, Montoya and García-Camarillo have Six-Deer describe a "mountain that turns red at sunset." The Sandía (Watermelon) Mountains take their name from this phenomenon because the range's jagged edges glow alternately black and red at dusk and resemble the colors of a watermelon. Although the writers make much of the reference to the "Watermelon" Mountains in the text, Montoya's photograph illustrates this event to a limited degree.

***Codex Delilah*, Panel 7, Register 4**

In case the viewer does not recognize the New Mexican landscape, the text in the final register of the final panel identifies Six-Deer's location as the top of Sandía Mountain and informs the reader that the child reached its summit by mid-day. The text records the encounter between Crow-Woman and Six-Deer and charts a sudden reversal of roles. For the first time, Six-Deer becomes the person with power, the person "who knows." Surprisingly, Six-Deer finds Crow-Woman, the goal of her journey, sick and near death. Crow-Woman tells Six-Deer that the child has "arrived too late" and insists that she leave because Crow-Woman, rather than the source of life daily becomes the source of "death" and destruction. Nuclear missiles have been implanted into the mountain (understood as Crow-Woman's breasts) and, like a cancer, the old woman can feel the missiles gaining power inside her. Six-Deer insists that it is not "too late" and outlines a way to heal Crow-Woman. Much encouraged, Crow-Woman expresses gratitude toward both Six-Deer and Ix-Chel saying that "my old friend…has sent me hope." Crow-Woman then asks, "Will you stay with me, Six-Deer?" The text makes it clear that the child has reached her quest and she has found Aztlán, when Six-Deer says, "I will stay with you in Aztlán, my teacher." Most importantly, Six-Deer has discovered the purpose of her journey – she was sent to heal Crow-Woman. This concludes the formal analysis of *Codex Delilah*. The next section provides a brief overview of Delilah Montoya's art production and locates *Codex*

Delilah within this larger context.

***Codex Delilah*: Context within Delilah Montoya's Art Production**

Born in Fort Worth, Texas, Montoya grew up in the stockyard district of Omaha, Nebraska. Her parents were high-school sweethearts, the classic configuration of cheerleader and football player. Her father is first generation born in the United States to Polish immigrants, while her mother is Mexican-American, with roots deeply embedded in northern New Mexico. Montoya began drawing at an early age and cannot remember a time when she did not make art. She resided in Nebraska for the first two decades of her life, before returning "home" to Albuquerque in 1979. The artist retained her personal connection to New Mexico because she traveled to the Las Vegas area every summer to visit relatives. Trained as a commercial photographer, Montoya initially produced documentary photography influenced by Henri Cartier-Bresson and Bruce Davidson. However, Montoya quickly abandoned "straight" photography and began manipulating the photographic image with a combination of drawing, painting, and various printmaking processes. A vigorously productive artist, Montoya uses printmaking, photography, and installation to investigate issues of Chicana/o identity and spirituality from a mestiza and feminist viewpoint. Montoya currently serves as an Assistant Professor at the University of Houston where she

teaches photography.[189]

As part of an ongoing quest to define and articulate Aztlán, Montoya began an intensive investigation of religious iconography in 1986.[190] She began this exploration by researching the *santero* tradition and sacred areas such as the *Sanctuario de Chimayó*, a northern New Mexico site that has spiritual meaning for both native peoples and Catholics. For the traditional *santera/o* in New Mexico, carving the wooden figure of a saint is a holy or devotional act. The object's power and sanctity derives from the intention and virtue of its maker, in addition to the figure it represents. Montoya asked herself, "What kind of art is this that is not about craftsmanship but a conceptual attitude capturing the being it represents?"[191] This idea of art-making as sacred act influenced Montoya and prompted her use of Catholic rituals and devotional images, such as *Vía Crucis* (The Way of the Cross) and *El Corazón Sagrado* (The Sacred Heart of Jesus), and traditions stemming from her grandfather's participation in the Penitente Brotherhood[192] as inspiration for later

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[189] For analysis of Montoya's art production, see Jennifer A. González, "Negotiated Frontiers: Contemporary Chicano Photography," in *From the West: Chicano Narrative Photography* (San Francisco: The Mexican Museum, 1995), 17-22, Chon A. Noriega, "Many Wests," in *From the West: Chicano Narrative Photography* (San Francisco: The Mexican Museum, 1995), 9-15, Victor A. Sorell, "Behold Their Natural Affinities: Revelations About the Confluence of Chicana Photography and Altarmaking," in *Imágenes e Historias/Images and Histories*, ed. Constance Cortéz (Medford: Tufts University Gallery, 1999), 21-28. For Montoya's comments on her recent work with digital photography, see Delilah Montoya, "On Photographic Digital Imaging," *Aztlan* 27:1 (2002): 181-188.
[190] Delilah Montoya, "Saints and Sinners" (Master's Thesis, University of New Mexico, 1990), 11-12.
[191] Ibid., 12.
[192] Scholarly debate continues regarding the exact origins of the *Los Hermanos Penitentes* (The

work.

Montoya hails from a family of strong, creative, and articulate women and, not surprisingly, feminist recuperation and reinterpretation of mythic and iconic figures from Chicana/o culture such as the Virgen de Guadalupe, La Malinche, and La Llorona form a central aspect of her work. Her reinterpretation of these figures parallels early reclamation of Chicana icons both in literature and in the visual arts. Increasingly interested in portraying images of women who step outside of accepted gender boundaries (the so-called *las malcriadas* or bad girls), Montoya recently exhibited her re-vision of *Doña Sebastiana*[193] and is currently developing a photographic series on Chicana and Latina boxers with the assistance of María Theresa Márquez.

Penitente Brotherhood) with many theories linking its development in Northern New Mexico and Southern Colorado to the Third Order of St. Francis, a lay religious order established by St. Francis of Assisi in 1221. However, the *Hermandad,* as it is also known, functioned as a *confradía* (confraternity) or mutual aid society and developed in tandem with Catholic religious practice during the early 1800's. Due to the scarcity of priests, brothers provided spiritual and economic support for members of these communities and their presence served to preserve *Hispana/o* traditions and culture. For more information, please see Fray Angélico Chávez, "The Penitentes of New Mexico," *New Mexico Historical Review* 29 (1954): 97-123, Marta Weigle, *Brothers of Light, Brothers of Blood: The Penitentes of the Southwest* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1976), William Wroth, *Images of Penance, Images of Mercy: Southwestern Santos in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), Pulido, *The Sacred World of the Penitentes*.

[193] *Doña Sebastiana* is Montoya's revision of the New Mexican figure of death or *La Muerte*, represented by a skeleton who sits inside the Penitente Death Cart with a bow and arrow. Members of the Penitente Brotherhood pull the Death Cart during Holy Week processions. Montoya exhibited a digital print of this figure and a digital video as part of "¡Picarte! Photography Beyond Representation," an exhibit curated by Roberto Buitrón for the Heard Museum in Phoenix, Arizona, and held from November 8 to March 14, 2004.

In addition to the collaboration that produced *Codex Delilah*, García-Camarillo and Montoya created another artist's book in 1992. *Crickets in My Mind* consists of nine double-sided panels illustrated with prints by Montoya and handwritten entries by both the artist and García-Camarillo. Montoya used handmade paper to fashion the work and attached small sections of human hair and horsehair to the bound edge of the book. In this work, Montoya used printmaking as her primary medium rather than photography. While *Codex Delilah* might first appear as a departure from the artist's previous and subsequent work, the codex includes aspects of small-scale sculpture, installation, and photographic processes, combinations that occur repeatedly in her work.

Montoya's ongoing use of photography in combination with altars or installations derives from earlier photographic documentation of sacred sites such as her grandfather's morada (Penitente meeting house or chapel) in *Saints and Sinners*, a work Montoya developed in 1990 for her Master of Arts degree at the University of New Mexico. The theme of duality, the idea of spiritual transformation, and the integration of Aztlán in this project prefigure the later formal and conceptual concerns of *Codex Delilah.* For this work, Montoya placed a photo mural over an altar that she specifically designed for audience participation. She intended the two formal elements to join visually and symbolically represent the duality of "saint" and "sinner." The artwork combined images of San Isidro, her grandfather's morada, and her

contemporary interpretation of the Stations of the Cross.[194] Because her grandfather was born nearby, San Isidro was his literal and "spiritual home." The artist recognized San Isidro as a symbol of her "historic past," her "personal origins," and therefore her understanding of Aztlán.[195] Before producing some the elements in the artwork, Montoya participated in the Catholic sacrament of confession and later maintained a meditative state when executing the fourteen glass jars that correspond to the sequence of Christ's Passion. García-Camarillo accompanied Montoya during the photo shoot of the morada and aided her with the production of the installation.

Saints and Sinners consisted of a composite print photo mural measuring nine by seven and a half feet with the altar, a shallow wooden box placed underneath, that contained earth and numerous other objects. In the photo mural, the artist visually represented the tension between saint and sinner by contrasting the image's right and left sides with cool and warm tones that symbolized Christ's Death (cool/left) and Resurrection (warm/right).[196] Montoya dedicated the installation to her grandfather, Reyes García, and placed his photograph on the altar along with candles, rosaries, and the fourteen glass jars whose contents symbolized Christ's Passion. As Montoya had

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[194] The Stations of the Cross form a central ritual within Penitente and Catholic practice with each station portraying the chronological steps from the time Christ is condemned to death until His body is laid in the tomb. The Stations take both two and three-dimensional form and are generally found along interior church walls. Believers walk along a circular path and pause at individual stations to meditate on each event and recite ritual prayers.
[195] Montoya, "Saints and Sinners", 13-15.
[196] Ibid., 15-16.

intended, viewers interacted with the work by adding special items to the altar and rearranging some of the objects. I discuss another more contemporary example of Montoya's engagement with the photo mural in the following section within the larger context of Chicana/o art.

Codex Delilah: Context within Chicana/o Art

In one of the earliest works concerning Chicana/o art,[197] Jacinto Quirarte documented the presence, production, and contribution of Mexican-American[198] artists during the first half of the twentieth century. Quirarte began his study with an historic overview of the transformation of the territories of Mesoamerica into New Spain from the conquest through the Colonial period, 1519-1823. Tracing early European exploration and the establishment of communities within the conquered regions, part of which ultimately formed the Southwestern United States, he identified two streams of artistic production that served as major sources of inspiration and influence on "Mexican-American" artists in the twentieth century. These forms included mission architecture and its associated religious art and the presence of Mexican muralists in the United States. Quirarte organized his groundbreaking study into loosely defined decades based on the year of the artists' births. While Quirarte's work constitutes a

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[197] Jacinto Quirarte, *Mexican American Artists* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1973).
[198] This study uses a variety of terms to describe and name people of Mexican descent in the United States, while privileging the words Chicana and Chicano. Peoples of Mexican and Spanish descent in the United States use a variety of terms to describe themselves depending on geographic region and political inclination.

major contribution to the historiography of Chicana/o art and while he does recognize the contributions of women artists, male artists comprised the weight of the study.

Tomás Ybarra-Frausto and Shifra Goldman produced the next major contribution to scholarship on Mexican American art with the publication in 1985 of *Arte Chicano*: *A Comprehensive Annotated Bibliography of Chicano Art, 1965-1981*.[199] In this work, the authors proposed a theoretical model for the study of Chicano art and subsumed Quirarte's work under "the Mexican American period."[200] Ybarra-Frausto and Goldman articulated two major periods in Chicano art; the first phase termed the "Creation of the Project" took place from 1965-1975 and the second phase termed "Neutralization and Recuperation of the Project" took place from 1975-1990. Characterized by a powerful nationalistic drive, the first phase articulated its goals in several manifestos such as *El Plan Spiritual de Aztlán* and *El Plan de Santa Bárbara*. These manifestos called for new images that reflected pride in Chicana/o history and culture. For many artists, this mandated a return to Mexico and Mexican indigenous heritage before First Contact for source material and inspiration. The second phase questioned how Chicano art would continue to thrive and be viable after

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[199] Shifra M. Goldman and Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, *Arte Chicano: A Comprehensive Annotated Bibliography of Chicano Art, 1965-1981* (Berkeley: Chicano Studies Library Publications Unit, University of California, 1985).

[200] For an overview of recent contributions to the critical assessment of Chicana/o art, please see Victor A. Sorell, "A Triumph for Chicana/o Visual Art and Its Historiography," *Art Journal* 63:2 (Summer 2004).

the intensity of the movement waned and some of the early goals of the Chicano Movement seemed accomplished. Artists increasingly used commercial ventures rather than community art centers for the circulation and promotion of their work. Women artists, active from the beginning of the movement, were gaining increasing recognition for their work and often advanced different issues than those addressed by male artists. As a result, the very definition of Chicano art came into question.

From the earliest days of El Movimiento Chicano, Chicana artists have recuperated and revised female icons in individual works of art, such as Yolanda López's *Guadalupe Series* from 1978 and Ester Hernández's *La Virgen de Guadalupe Defendiendo los Derechos de los Xicanos/The Virgin of Guadalupe Defending the Rights of Chicanos* from 1975. Montoya's work shares many of the thematic and formal considerations of the altars and installations of Hernández, López, Amalia Mesa-Bains, and Celia Herrera Rodríguez, the photographs of Laura Aguilar and Kathy Vargas, and the prints of Yreina Cervántez that rewrite Aztlán from a Chicana point of view.

Montoya, Hernández, and López combine the elements of the sacred and the secular in their installations often placing a particular image in the center of the artwork. Montoya's use of a photograph of *pinto* (prisoner) Felix Martínez exemplifies this point. The photograph of Martínez has received widespread circulation because the artist has repeatedly featured this image in several photographic installations. In

1998, the *Musée Puech Denys* in Rodez, France, invited Montoya to participate in an exhibition entitled "Roundtrip."[201] Rodez's Catholic cathedral contains one of two representations of the Virgin of Guadalupe that exist in France; the second image resides in the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris. The organizers of the show brought Montoya together with eleven other artists, the majority of whom live in New Mexico. Montoya's piece, *The Guadalupano* (1998) (Fig. 2.30) featured the image of Martínez as the focal point of her installation. The artist pieced together several sections of a black and white photograph to create a picture of Martínez and augmented his center image with several smaller photographs depicting the Virgin of Guadalupe tattooed on several human bodies. In an ongoing project, Montoya had previously photographically documented these tattoos on the legs and arms of both men and women. Montoya exhibited some of these photographs from this series at the John Jay Gallery in New York in November of 1999. The Andrew Smith Gallery in Santa Fe, New Mexico, later represented many of the works from this thematic group. In contrast to these earlier images of small tattoos on limited areas of the body, Montoya's photograph of Martínez reveals that his large-scale tattoo covers the majority of his back.

The artist layered the notion of a photo mural installation with the sacred space

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[201] Christine Frerot, "Roundtrip: Twelve Artists from New Mexico, Musée Denys Puech, Rodez, France," *Art Nexus* 31 (February-April 1999): 100-101.

of an altar when she placed a variety of objects atop a lace cloth on the gallery floor. The objects such as candles, roses, a Mexican flag, the Mexica/Aztec calendar, figures of angels, and rocks produced a site that recognized both the sacred and the secular. In Montoya's words, the work addressed the Chicano vernacular while simultaneously engaging "the dark side of colonization, captivity, oppression, and survival,"[202] as illustrated by Martínez's forced incarceration. The artist photographed inmate Martínez inside a Bernalillo, New Mexico, detention center facing away from the camera with his prisoner's uniform pulled from his torso. The uniform's upper half lay draped about his waist in graceful folds, while his manacled wrists announced his captive status. Martínez's subsequent death, shortly after Montoya took this photograph, emphasized the ephemeral or transitory nature of life and increased the significance of the work. The initial artwork and Montoya's circulation of this image in later exhibitions, such as *Guadalupe en Piel* at Santa Fe's Andrew Smith Gallery and *La Grafica Chicana: Three Decades of Chicano Prints, 1970-2000* at the Phoenix Art Museum, elevate artworks using this image to that of an *ofrenda*. Ofrenda literally means "offering" but refers to home altars that commemorate deceased relatives constructed by family members in observance of *El Día de los Muertos* or Day of the Dead, celebrated annually in early November.

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[202] Delilah Montoya, "El Guadalupano" (1999); http://www.apanet.org/~selfhelp/shgmaestras4.html.

Montoya's use of a large object or photograph as the central point of a work is reminiscent of an earlier ofrenda by Ester Hernández that memorializes her father, a migrant worker who probably died from pesticide exposure (Figs. 2.31-2.33). In the work entitled *Installation - Day of the Dead* from 1989, Hernández replicated an earlier serigraph satirizing the Sun Maid Raisin logo and hung its large-scale reworked image from the gallery ceiling over personal articles carefully placed on the exhibition floor. The artist defined the exterior of the circular altar space with a series of large white rocks and emphasized this shape with an interior repeated ring of red carnations. She delineated the enclosed area into four equal quadrants, marked again with red carnations and reinforced at their exterior points along the circle with candles. Objects referring to her father's relationship with the earth as an agricultural laborer, such as his hat and harvesting tools, lie in the direct center of the altar under a three-part image of the Sun Maid gone "mad." In the artist's original serigraph, Hernández altered the Sun Maid image with its the robust and fecund woman proffering raisins by substituting her hearty face with a skull or death mask. For the later altar, she added vertical panels in the central image forming two additional views that appeared as the spectator moved around the altar. In the second image seen by the viewer, a woman field worker holds a container of freshly harvested grapes, her body almost completely obscurred by the clothing used to protect her skin from dangerous chemicals. In the final view created by the vertical panels, the artist repeats the field worker's image,

but this time replaces the woman's face with a skull that indicates the real cost of this agricultural product.

Yolanda López uses a similar formal treatment in her installation that examines the Chicana as domestic, rather than agricultural worker, entitled *The Nanny* (1994). In this work, López uses a folding wooden screen to define the space around her central object, a gray uniform with a white collar, and places the tools of the worker's trade on the gallery floor. The uniform, that could also be read as that of a maid, hangs on the wooden slats of the screen and its pockets bulge with a baby bottle and a small branch of leaves. The artist has adorned the garment with embroidered symbols referencing a Mesoamerican past that alter its initial meaning. [203] Two large-scale posters that appear to either side of the main section of the installation comment on the role of Chicanas and Mexicanas as providers of services and goods to European-American women. On the floor, López displays everyday material objects the define the nanny's work life; a laundry basket filled with clothing and hangers, a bottle of spray cleaner, assorted toys, and a container of baby powder.

Within the ongoing visual reclamation of female icons and the increasing representation of Chicana artists' aesthetic and political concerns, the Quincentenary in 1992 provided a powerful moment of reconsideration, a time to simultaneously look

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[203] Keller et al., *Contemporary Chicana and Chicano Art*, Volume 2, 90-91.

backward and forward. Activists and artists of mixed race and indigenous heritage examined the loss of cultural capital due to European contact and sought to envision a world where indigenous values and traditions could be recognized, sustained, and honored. This historical moment produced a renewed interest in many of the earlier concerns of El Movimiento Chicano including a reconsideration of indigenous identity. *Codex Delilah* clearly inherited the emphasis on cultural reclamation, preservation, and pride evident in early Movimiento period and reignited by Quincentennial observances. *Codex Delilah* continues the projects articulated in the early days of El Movimiento in three ways: 1) it demonstrates a return to indigenous roots as a source of artistic inspiration, 2) it has a teachable or didactic quality, and 3) it engages with the notion of Aztlán. Montoya has said, "To know Aztlán, know who you are, know what you have done, know the landscape you belong to."[204] *Codex Delilah* visualizes the artist's search for and understanding of Aztlán through the power of its female characters, the construction of its histories, and its sacred and secular geographies. Montoya goes beyond a mere citation of Aztlán and continues its feminist transformation by visually "rendering the nation a s/he."[205]

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[204] Cook-Romero, "Wonder under the covers."
[205] Here I refer to Laura Pérez's analysis of Chicana artistic interventions in the male construction of Chicano nationalism. Please see Laura E. Pérez, "El desorden, Nationalism, and Chicana/o Aesthetics," in *Between Woman and Nation: Nationalisms, Transnational Feminism, and the State*, ed. Norma Alarcón, Caren Kaplan, and Minoo Moallem (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 19-46.

Chapter 3

To Find Our Lives:

Codex Delilah as Hero(ine)'s *Jornada*/Journey

Introduction

This chapter begins the analysis of other meaning(s) present in *Codex Delilah* and argues that concerns with the sacred and spirituality are intricately interwoven throughout the narrative and its visual representation. In the codex, Montoya uses a mythic journey as an organizing device to structure Six-Deer's realization of personal power and her ultimate redemption of the world. The dissertation positions this movement through time and space as a sacred journey. To discuss these concurrent concerns, this chapter considers the concept of journey through an examination of the forms of rites of passage, rituals of initiation, and pilgrimage. I find a comparative investigation of these forms crucial to an understanding and interpretation of the additional significance of *Codex Delilah*. A comparative analysis provides a means to illustrate how the narrative functions as a vehicle for Six-Deer's personal and spiritual transformation and to demonstrate the codex's value beyond its reconstruction of women's contributions to history. Further, an exploration of these forms allows for the discussion of the integral role of Nepantla (the place between) within the codex and its characters. The urgent issues of migration, transnationalism, and globalization

increasingly position Nepantla as critical to any discussion of the legacy of the conquest and the construction of Chicana/o identity. Further, Montoya has implicated the role of Nepantla in the codex and in contemporary Chicana/o life. When speaking of the creation of the mestiza/o that she illustrates in Panel 2 of *Codex Delilah*, Montoya has stated, "We were born out of the conquest, out of Nepantla."[206]

To frame the analysis in this chapter, I "feminize" Joseph Campbell's well-known phrase "Hero's Journey" as "Hero(ine)'s *Jornada*/Journey."[207] I invoke Campbell's phrase, not only because Montoya intended to create a heroine in Six-Deer, but also to show that *Codex Delilah*'s textual and visual narrative(s) shares a similar structure with the world's archetypal cultural narratives, myths, and literary stories in the *bildungsroman* tradition as analyzed by Campbell.[208] Secondly, and perhaps most significantly, the dissertation adapts the phrase "To Find Our Life,"

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[206] Delilah Montoya, personal conversation with the author, Atlanta, Georgia, 19 February 2005.
[207] Joseph Campbell (1904-1987), a student of mythology and world religions, noticed a pattern of actions in the world's great stories from all periods and cultures. He adapted Arnold Van Gennep's earlier model of rites of passage to create his idea of the "Hero's Journey." According to Campbell's model, the potential she-ro/hero leaves their comfortable, known existence, undergoes a series of tests or trials, and through the testing process develops a source of power. After recognizing this newly developed power, the individual returns to their previous environment equipped to solve a specific problem that benefits their community. See Joseph Campbell, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, 2nd. ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968).
[208] Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) introduced the literary genre of *bildungsroman* in the late eighteenth century with his novel *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship). The German word *roman* means "novel" and *bildung* is understood as "formation." This literary tradition generally charts the development of a young person's character and worldview through the course of a novel. In Chicana/o literature, Sandra Cisneros's *The House on Mango Street* and Rudolfo Anaya's *Bless Me, Ultima* can be considered among numerous examples of *bildungsroman.*

taken from North American anthropologist Peter Furst's study of the annual Huichol pilgrimage from Western Mexico to their ancestral homeland of Wirikúta in Jalisco, Mexico.[209] I use this phrase to emphasize and make connections between the journey portrayed in *Codex Delilah* and surviving pre-contact indigenous journeys related to the issues of continuity, community, spirituality, and cultural preservation discussed later in this study. A comparison among the journey portrayed by Montoya and these

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[209] Mexican historian, writer, journalist, and social critic Fernando Benítez was the first non-Indian to participate in the Huichol pilgrimage and provides an important account of the pilgrimage in Fernando Benítez, *En la tierra mágicia del peyote los indios de México*, 1st ed. (México: Biblioteca Era. Ensayo, 1968). This work also surveys the study of Huichol life and culture that began with Norwegian ethnographer Carl Lumholtz's first publication in 1900. *En la tierra mágicia del peyote los indios de méxico* is part of Benítez's larger four-volume work on the indigenous peoples of Mexico. Please see Fernando Benítez, *Los indios de México* (México: Ediciones Era, 1967). In 1966, Peter T. Furst participated in the annual pilgrimage of the Huichol people from the Mexican state of Jalisco to the neighboring Mexican state of San Luis Potosí, a distance of three hundred miles. In 1969, he released his documentary "To Find Our Life: The Peyote Hunt of the Huichols of Mexico." In the film, Huichol shaman Ramón Medina leads a group of pilgrims to the sacred site of Wirikúta, the Huichol place of origins, to "hunt" or harvest peyote, a plant with hallucinogenic properties. See Furst's extensive scholarship on Huichol life and art in Peter T. Furst, *The Parching of the Maize: An Essay on the Survival of Huichol Ritual* (Wein: E. Stiglmayr, 1968), Peter T. Furst, *Myth in Art: A Huichol Depicts His Reality* (Los Angeles: University of California, Latin American Center, 1969), Peter T. Furst, "To Find Our Life: Peyote Among the Huichol Indians of Mexico," in *Flesh of the Gods: The Ritual Use of Hallucinogens*, ed. Peter T. Furst (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972), Peter T. Furst and Salomo Nahmed, *Mitos y arte huicholes* (México: Secretaria de Educación Pública, 1972), Stacy B. Schaefer and Peter T. Furst, eds., *People of the Peyote: Huichol Indian History, Religion, and Survival* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996). North American anthropologist Barbara Myerhoff conducted the pilgrimage to Wirikuta with Furst in December of 1966. Her work on this phenomenon includes Barbara Myerhoff, "The Deer-Maize-Peyote Complex Among the Huichol Indians of Mexico" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1968), Barbara Myerhoff, *The Peyote Hunt* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972), Barbara Myerhoff, *Peyote Hunt: The Sacred Journey of the Huichol Indians* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), Barbara Myerhoff, "The Huichol Quest for Paradise," *Parabola: Myth and the Quest for Meaning* 1 (1975), Barbara Myerhoff, "Return to Wirikuta: Ritual Reversal and Symbolic Continuity on the Peyote Hunt of the Huichol Indians," in *The World Upside Down: Studies in Symbolic Inversion*, ed. Barbara A. Babcock (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978). Myerhoff and Furst's scholarship has been criticized for its "popularization" of Huichol life and culture and its occasional inaccuracies.

surviving indigenous journeys reveals deeper layers of meanings present in their symbols, narratives, rituals, and worldview that enrich this chapter's interpretation and understanding of the sacred.

In this section of the dissertation, the research investigates Six-Deer's journey and seeks to answer two central questions: What happens as a result of the journey? What does the journey produce or create? First, I provide an explanation of the initial articulation of rites of passage advanced by Arnold Van Gennep, demonstrate its development by Victor Turner, and chart the contributions of Gloria Anzaldúa's theory of Nepantla, while observing Anzaldúa's improvements on Van Gennep's and Turner's findings. The study chronologically traces Anzaldúa's development of Nepantla and positions it as central to an understanding of *Codex Delilah*. Secondly, the chapter makes clear how *Codex Delilah* fulfills the definition of a rite of passage and a ritual of initiation by an examination of the characters, symbols, and actions in individual panels of the codex. Thirdly, I offer an overview of pilgrimage and define its general structure in contrast to rites of initiation. Lastly, within this paradigm, I analyze selected panels from *Codex Delilah* and posit Six-Deer's journey as spiritual and political pilgrimage.

Ceremonial *Schéma*: Arnold van Gennep and *Les Rites de Passage*

Belgian anthropologist Arnold van Gennep (1873-1957) came of age as a scholar within an intellectual environment that valued the systematic and precise

ordering of information based on direct observation.[210] The then current philosophies of positivism and empiricism proclaimed that "true knowledge" resulted from the gathering and categorization of scientific data from direct experience. Thus, Van Gennep sought to contribute to scientific discourse analyzing and classifying what he termed "magico-religious acts or rites."

After observing cultures worldwide, Van Gennep noticed an underlying pattern that recurred in rituals associated with life cycle changes such as birth, puberty, marriage, and death. He also found this pattern present in ceremonies that marked changes in social position such as job promotion, ordination, or ascension to rulership. In 1908, he articulated his now classic tripartite schéma (scheme or model) of les rites de passage (rites of passage) that described this reappearing sequence of events. Van Gennep proposed that rites of passage consisted of three distinct sequential stages: 1) *séparation* (separation), 2) *marge* (transition), and 3) *aggregation* (incorporation).[211] In a rite of passage, first, the individual leaves a previous condition, level of status, or stage of life; second, goes through a period of transition; and third, returns or is re-incorporated into their original environment or community, now a changed individual. Additionally, he discovered that specific actions accompanied each phase of rites of

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[210] Arnold Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), v-vi.
[211] Ibid., 10.

passage. Using the Latin word, *limen*, or threshold, to describe the transition stage in rites of passage, he emphasized liminality's importance by further defining the three stages as pre-liminal, liminal, and post-liminal.

During the first or pre-liminal phase of rites of passage, the individual prepares for the change(s) to come with rites of separation, actions that sever one's connection with their previous state or social condition. In a familiar example, students transition from high school or college to the larger world of adult employment and economic self-sufficiency during annual graduation ceremonies. The process of separation from student status can begin months before the actual commencement date with a flurry of college applications or job interviews and the final confirmation of all graduation requirements. In addition, the ordering of robes or academic regalia and the planning of familial celebrations constitute other essential "pre-liminary" rites that emphasize the upcoming transition.

In the second or liminal phase of this rite of passage, the individual performs actions that actualize their change in status. For students, the graduation ceremony forms the central aspect of the transition stage. The procession of the candidates into the graduation hall corporeally acts out and parallels the internal recognition of this important change. While years of preparation have propelled the candidate to this moment, the advisory speeches, handshakes from important personages, the receipt of the diploma, and the moving of the cap's tassel from one side of the head to the other

accomplish the ceremonial function of the ritual.

In the final and post-liminal phase of rites of passage, the larger society incorporates the newly changed individual into the routine of daily life and new responsibilities generally accompany this expanded role. The ritual tossing of the commencement cap into the air, the receipt of congratulations and gifts, and parting from roommates or friends initiate this stage. The inauguration of career employment or college entrance, frequently accompanied by geographic relocation, also assists the graduate's incorporation within the general populace. Van Gennep maintained that changes in status or life condition affected the individual but the community as well. He indicated that status changes could have negative repercussions. Therefore, rites of passage function not only to orient the individual to their new position but to provide society a means to adapt as well.[212]

Van Gennep did not provide an in-depth examination of the middle or transition period. However, in his concluding remarks, he stated that the middle stage of rites of passage "…possesses an autonomy of its own as a secondary system inserted within a ceremonial whole,"[213] an observation that later scholars would develop. During many rituals, he observed community members carrying the ceremonial subject to prevent their feet from touching the ground and cited this act as

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[212] Ibid., 12-13.
[213] Ibid., 185.

an example of a secondary, autonomous system. Van Gennep felt that this action occurred "universally" during the transition period in rituals worldwide.[214] He explained that when members of a society carry a ritual subject, the act of carrying

> …is intended to show that at the moment in question the individual does not belong either to the sacred or to the profane world…and he is therefore isolated and maintained in an *intermediate position*, held between heaven and earth, just as the deceased on his bier or in his temporary coffin is suspended between life and true death. (*Emphasis added*)[215]

Van Gennep pointed out that other scholars had not yet studied this "secondary system" as an aspect of rites of passage.[216] He limited his consideration of these autonomous transitional intervals to the novitiate and engagement because these examples often involve intensive periods of training and self-examination that lead to a lasting change in status. Religious and/or social markers strictly define the stages found in these extended periods and hold the individuals in this "intermediate position." During these periods of preparation and evaluation of future commitment, religious dictates physically cloister the novice, while social structures set apart betrothed couples. The possible autonomy of these transitional states, noted by Van Gennep, encouraged later scholars to postulate the middle or liminal stage as a

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[214] With this comment, Van Gennep demonstrates his position as a modernist and a colonialist because, in our increasingly complex post-modern and post-colonial world, we no longer accept the idea of universals or a single understanding of "truth." See Renato Rosaldo, *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993).
[215] Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, 186.
[216] Ibid., 191-192.

permanent, rather than temporary, condition.

Fruitful Darkness: Victor Turner and the Development of Liminality

British anthropologist Victor Turner (1920-1983) expanded Van Gennep's initial formation of rites of passage through his ongoing consideration of its transition stage. Under the sponsorship of England's Manchester University, Turner spent four years studying the Ndembu people in Zambia, Africa, field study that would support his expansion of liminality and form the basis of much of his later scholarship. In 1964, he accepted a professorship in anthropology at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, and temporarily resided in Hastings, England, while problems with travel documents were resolved. *The Rites of Passage* had become available in English translation only four years earlier and Turner wrote his initial investigation of liminality in the Hastings Public Library.[217] Ironically, while in a prolonged period of transition himself, Turner developed his understanding of this concept central to his later work.

Turner began his extensive scholarship on liminality with "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in *Rites de Passage,*" an essay published as part of the proceedings from the spring meeting of the American Ethnological Society in 1964 and later incorporated in Turner's first book, *The Forest of Symbols*. In the initial

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[217] Matieu Deflem, "Ritual, Anti-Structure, and Religion: A Discussion of Victor Turner's Processual Symbolic Analysis," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 30:1 (1991).

essay, Turner addressed his remarks primarily to the second phase of Van Gennep's rites of passage, that of transition or the liminal period. Turner viewed society as an arrangement of positions that holds people in relationship to each other.[218] The liminal period in rites of passage falls between these carefully arranged and maintained webs or structures and, therefore, Turner referred to this period as "interstructural" or between structures.[219] He defined these moments of transition as "…a process, a becoming, and …even a transformation."[220]

Turner framed his discussion of liminality primarily within rites of initiation because he felt these rites best illustrated the transition stage. In his analysis, Turner identified three central attributes of liminality; 1) structural invisibility, 2) ambiguity, and 3) neutrality.[221] He believed that the initiand (the person undergoing initiation) was structurally invisible because society lacks suitable categories or definitions for this condition. According to Turner, each culture tries to define the indefinable, but lacks the language to explain these phenomena. What name describes a person while

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[218] At this point in his career, Turner's work reflects his participation in the Manchester School of British anthropology with its emphasis on structural anthropology. Structuralism, a theory developed by another Belgian anthropologist, Claude Levi Straus, uses the "structures" that compose society to analyze and ascribe meaning to social and cultural forms. See Claude Levi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, trans. Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfestf Schoep (New York: Basic Books, 1963), Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked*, trans. John and Doreen Weightman, 1st. US ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), Claude Levi-Strauss, *Myth and Meaning* (New York: Schocken Books, 1979).
[219] Victor Turner, *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), 93.
[220] Ibid., 94.
[221] Ibid., 99.

becoming something else? The very process of becoming renders them *between* categories of naming. The person is neither "one-thing-nor-the other" and therefore, ambiguous and neutral.[222]

Since initiands exist between structures and describing and defining them proves difficult, what symbols does society use to represent them? Turner found that cultures most often attributed symbols of birth and death to the liminal person undergoing initiation rites.[223] The community views liminaries as if they were simultaneously dead and newly born and treats them accordingly. For example, community elders may physically bury or pose the initiand in the posture of a corpse. Alternately, members of the society may compare the initiate to an "embryo" or unweaned infant. Society understands the person-in-transition as casting off a certain state, condition, or way of being for another. Therefore, initiands symbolically "die" to their previous life and role, while, at the same time, they are "born" to a new position in society.

According to Turner, liminality functions to communicate the *sacra* to initiands**.** By sacra, he means those images, objects, or words that possess sacred

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[222] Victor Turner, "Variations on a Theme of Liminality," in *Secular Ritual*, ed. Sally F. Moore and Barbara G. Meyerhoff (Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1977), 37.
[223] Turner, *The Forest of Symbols*, 96-97, Victor Turner, "Death and the Dead in the Pilgrimage Process," in *Religious Encounters with Death: Insights from the History and Anthropology of Religions*, ed. Frank E. Reynolds and Earle H. Waugh (University Park and London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1977).

power used to transmit the society's cultural and spiritual capital. During initiation rites, teachers reveal sacred information through various means: 1) through the revelation of images of deities, holy figures, or power objects, 2) through performed actions or ritualized behavior, or 3) through chants, prayers, or litanies of ancestors' names. The images, objects, and performers used in the revelation process often possess grotesquely exaggerated features and elders impress the sacra's significance through intense and startling confrontations. During the liminal period that Turner also termed a "stage of reflection," the individual encounters the full power their society's values, customs, and knowledge.[224] Besides absorbing their society's essential information, Turner suggested that the initiand's function might be to generate new forms of knowledge and ways of being. If, as Turner indicates, liminality constitutes "a realm of pure possibility" then, in this fertile moment, new forms and ideas can come into existence.[225]

Paradoxically, Turner noted an apparent contradiction during the liminal stage of initiatory rituals. In these moments of unstructured or non-structured reality, he found that cultures' fundamental messages and societies' basic structures were most easily recognized. Therefore, the initiand's encounter with the sacra provided a particularly rich location for the analysis of the essential elements of culture. As a

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[224] Turner, *The Forest of Symbols*, 105.
[225] Ibid., 97.

result, Turner urged other scholars to study rites of passage, especially the events and experiences that took place during its central stage of liminality.[226] In a later essay, the anthropologist explored the idea of limen as threshold. He used the image of a threshold that transformed into a corridor or tunnel to metaphorically demonstrate how the liminal interlude may extend beyond a short temporal passage. Like Van Gennep, Turner evoked the committed religious life when he indicated the possibility that some liminaries or persons-in-transition may remain perpetually in the liminal state. He suggested that Van Gennep's autonomous intervals within liminality could exist as a permanent condition and proposed that the liminal phase "…may cease to be a mere transition and become a set way of life, a state, that of anchorite or monk."[227]

***Tierra de Medio*: Gloria E. Anzaldúa and the Theory of Nepantla**

Gloria Anzaldúa's book *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*[228] burst onto the literary and cultural studies scene in 1987, six years after the groundbreaking *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color.*[229] Many critics and scholars heralded the earlier *Bridge*, co-edited with Cherríe Moraga, as the first major collection of writing by women of color and felt that its release contributed to

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[226] Ibid., 110.
[227] Turner, "Variations," 37.
[228] Gloria E. Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1999).
[229] Cherríe Moraga and Gloria E. Anzaldúa, eds., *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (New York: Kitchen Table/Women of Color Press, 1981).

the explosion of Chicana and Latina literature in the 1980s.[230] In *Borderlands/La Frontera,* a collection of autobiographical essays and poems, Anzaldúa advanced the concept of "borderlands." She used this concept to describe, not only the actual literal geographic regions of the border between the United States of Mexico and the United States of North America, but to acknowledge and express those areas or borders between cultural, spiritual, class, sexual preference, and gender differences regardless of physical location. Those who inhabit the borderlands cross these multiple spaces daily and, as a result, constantly negotiate simultaneous and conflicting realities.

Anzaldúa proposed a new consciousness, termed Mestiza consciousness, one that evolves in response to the multiple borders of nationality, sexuality, class, and ethnicity encountered in these zones. When describing this consciousness, she stressed its inherent mutability, ambiguity, and plurality. Anzaldúa stated that the new Mestiza develops the capacity to tolerate contradictions and uncertainty while moving between others' expectations and her understanding of herself. Chicanas possessing Mestiza consciousness transform this very ambiguity into "something else," a place of potentially powerful generation and creativity.[231] Ultimately, this knowledge may

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[230] Tey Diana Rebolledo has written and compiled critically important collections of Chicana literature and literary criticism. See Tey Diana Rebolledo and Eliana S. Rivero, eds., *Infinite Divisions: An Anthology of Chicana Literature* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1993), Tey Diana Rebolledo, *Women Singing in the Snow: A Cultural Analysis of Chicana Literature* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1995).
[231] Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, 101.

allow Chicanas and others to move beyond opposing binaries of sex, race, ethnicity, and gender to transform the either-or separation of subject-object positions.[232]

In the book's final essay, Anzaldúa first introduced the concept of Nepantla, a theory that parallels some aspects of Turner's notions of liminality. However, she fashioned this critically important construct with a *fronteriza* perspective inflected with mestiza consciousness. In direct contrast to Van Gennep's colonial position and Turner's modernist understandings of the self, Anzaldúa developed Nepantla from a post-modern and decolonial point of view. She considered Nepantla a "whole philosophy," one that applied to women as a group and women of color, but especially to women of color who are artists because "the artist is already set apart."[233] Although Anzaldúa did not directly cite Van Gennep or Turner, she declared, "The ideas are not new…But I put it in this different context, gave the experience a name with words from my own culture."[234]

As a philosophy, Anzaldúa used the concept of Nepantla to explain and postulate a state of in-betweenness and to describe the uneasy state of mind that Chicanas experience due to the incongruous and contradictory nature of borderlands. She articulated the quandaries Chicanas face that result from multiple, intersecting, and

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[232] Ibid., 102.
[233] Ann Elliott Sherman, "Crack in the World, Latina Writers and Artists at MACLA and Villa Montalvo," *Metro Silicon Valley*, November 2-8, 1995.
[234] Ibid.

overlapping positions and identities.

> In a constant state of mental nepantilism, an Aztec word meaning torn between ways, *la mestiza* is a product of the transfer of the culture and spiritual values of one group to another. Being tricultural, monolingual, bilingual or multilingual, speaking a patois, and in a state of perpetual transition, the mestiza faces the dilemma of the mixed breed: which collectivity does the daughter of a darkskinned mother listen to?[235]

In this first articulation of Nepantla, Anzaldúa stressed three major aspects that create the core of the concept. Nepantla consists of a mental state, a concern with identity, and a condition of perpetual transition. At this point in her formulation, Anzaldúa primarily addressed the mental aspects of Nepantla and centered the process in the mind, while also implicating the body. Anzaldúa articulated the second core aspect of Nepantla as identity, exemplified by the question, "Who am I and to what community do I belong?" She defined language and skin color or hue as markers of these communities. Finally, rather than describe Nepantla as a transitional period that a person moves through and ultimately beyond toward the final stage of reincorporation, Anzaldúa envisioned Nepantla as a permanent condition or state. A person who continually crosses, but never arrives at a final destination, lives permanently in tierra de medio (the place between). This person remains in Nepantla

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[235] Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, 100.

as a continual state of transition.[236] Her formulation of Nepantla echoes both Van Gennep's suggestion that some transitional stages may posses a certain autonomy and Turner's idea that liminality may not just be a transitional period but instead, become a way of life.[237]

Anzaldúa's Theoretical Expansion of Nepantla

Over the next seventeen years and until her premature death from diabetes-related complications in May 2004, Anzaldúa revisited and expanded her initial formation of Nepantla. In two separate interviews from 1991, Anzaldúa reinforced the link between Nepantla and identity. At that time, she reiterated Nepantla to describe a process of identity formation and to express the transition from current identity to emergent identity.[238] Anzaldúa viewed identity, or one's sense of self, as temporary, not fixed or stable, and in constant evolution. She also connected Nepantla with her existing concept of the Borderlands to emphasize Borderlands as a metaphor for numerous crossings including psychological, physical, and mental processes of

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[236] In an interview with Karin Ikas from 1999, Anzaldúa described Nepantla as "…a Nahuatl word for the space between two bodies of water, the space between two worlds. It is a limited space, a space where you are not this or that but where you are changing." Ibid., 237. Note the similarity to Turner's description of liminal beings when he describes them as "…they are neither-this-nor-that." Turner, "Variations," 37.

[237] Anzaldúa repeatedly uses the word "liminal" to describe the in-between state of Nepantla. In her final work, she includes the term "threshold," but cites neither Turner nor Van Gennep. Although these references are absent from her published writings, I think that her use of these words and concepts likely implies an awareness of the scholarship.

[238] Inés Hernández-Ávila, "Quincentennial: From Victimhood to Active Resistance, Inés Hernández-Ávila y Gloria E. Anzaldúa (1991)," in *Gloria E. Anzaldúa: Interviews/Entrevistas*, ed. AnaLouise Keating (New York: Routledge, 1999), 177-178.

transition. Nepantla, then, is where these processes meet and transform.[239]

During the four years after Anzaldúa debuted Borderlands as theory and metaphor, scholars often applied her concepts more narrowly than she intended. In response, she emphasized the broader scope of this theory by stressing Nepantla's connection to the spiritual realm. Anzaldúa expanded Nepantla's initial range to describe the emotional and psychic borders crossed in these zones and to deepen the spiritual and indigenous aspects of Borderlands theory. When in this transformative state, Anzaldúa believed that one could access supernatural and intuitive sources of power and information.[240] Significantly, Anzaldúa also theorized Nepantla as a way of creating knowledge. When a person lives in this in-between state, self-knowledge and awareness often increase. This bears some similarity with Turner's idea of liminality as a place of possibility where initiands or liminaries can create new forms or perceive reality from a different perspective.

In another key development from 1991, she further involved the body and its desires when she brought Nepantla into the discussion of sexual expression and sexual identity. Anzaldúa felt that one could choose one's sexual orientation and stated that this choice can only happen when one is Nepantla. Again, possibly alluding to Van

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[239] AnaLouise Keating, "Making Choices: Writing, Spirituality, Sexuality, and the Political, An Interview with AnaLouise Keating (1991)," in *Gloria E. Anzaldúa: Interviews/Entrevistas* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 176.
[240] Ibid.

Gennep and Turner's previous scholarship, she expressly described Nepantla as a "liminal, in-between space" and emphasized Nepantla as a place of ambiguity.[241] Although she had previously hinted at the challenges and difficulties presented by this state, now she declared that these periods of change entailed discomfort and even personal anguish.

Three years later in 1994, Anzaldúa joined another vital concept she developed, the *Coatlicue* state, with Nepantla. Anzaldúa used the Mexica goddess Coatlicue[242] to describe this precursory stage to Nepantla. She defined the Coatlicue state as an inner process of spiritual transformation and expanded consciousness that Chicanas undergo when they directly confront their deepest fears.[243] Again, she implicated the centrality of Nepantla and the Coatlicue state in the refashioning of one's identity, the creation of a new self, and an increased perception of the world. She also emphasized Nepantla's connection to sexuality, desire, and sexual identity stating, "You used to be this person, but now maybe you are different in some way.

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[241] Ibid., 168.
[242] In the Mexica cosmos, Coatlicue (She of the Serpent Skirt) gave birth to one daughter, *Coyolxauhqui*, and four hundred sons called the *Centzon Huitznahua*. Coatlicue conceived another son, Huitzilopóchtli, while cleaning the temple on Snake Mountain (*Coatepec*). She placed feathers of sacrificial birds, strewn around the temple floor, into the bodice of her garment and became pregnant. Mistakenly thinking their mother's pregnancy a result of immoral behavior, Coyolxauhqui and the Centzon Huitznahua conspired and succeeded in killing Coatlicue. At the moment of Coatlicue's death, Huitzilopóchtli emerged full-grown from his mother's body and murdered Coyolxauhqui before destroying his four hundred older brothers.
[243] Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, 63-73.

You're changing worlds and cultures and maybe classes, sexual preferences."[244] The Coatlicue state is the place of generation, of meltdown, and confrontation. Anzaldúa compared this state to being inside a womb and referred to it as being in "the cave, the dark," a place where one "hibernates," "hides," and "gestates," and ultimately, gives birth to themselves. Nepantla follows this gestation period as the "birth canal" or passageway back into the world, where one emerges a changed being.[245]

Nepantla, Creativity, and Artistic Practice

Not surprisingly, as writer and artist-activist, Anzaldúa also theorized the notion of creativity within her understanding of Nepantla and viewed Nepantla as an integral part of an artistic practice. While she implicated Nepantla in the process of creation as early as 1991, Anzaldúa later deepened her ideas about the connection between Nepantla and creativity. In an interview from 1995, she reprised an earlier statement that likened the anxiety one feels as a Chicana and/or a queer with the anxiety a writer experiences when confronting the blank page and again connects nepantla with liminality. "You're in this limbo state of nepantla porque (because) you're this but you're that, *estás en medio de todos estos* (being in the middle of all these) identity states of mind or states of consciousness; you're caught in a liminal

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[244] Debbie Blake and Carmen Abrego, "Doing Gigs: Speaking, Writing, and Change, An Interview with Debbie Black and Carmen Abrego (1994)," in *Gloria E. Anzaldúa: Interviews/Entrevistas*, ed. AnaLouise Keating (New York: Routledge, 1999), 225-226.
[245] Ibid.

state, in nepantla."[246] At this time, she also spoke eloquently of the situation of many Chicana artists. Addressing the movement between class lines that may occur when a Chicana artist or writer's work attracts mainstream attention, Anzaldúa described this crossing as "disorienting." She noted that, "The marginalized, starving Chicana artist who suddenly finds her work exhibited in mainstream museums, or being sold for thousands of dollars in prestigious galleries, as well as the once-neglected writer whose work is on every professor's syllabus for a time inhabit nepantla."[247]

Anzaldúa's commitment to the concept of Nepantla as part of the artistic process led her to collaborate with women artists and two Bay Area (California) arts' organizations. In 1995, Anzaldúa directed a cooperative art project entitled *Entre Américas: El Taller Nepantla*, (Between Americas: The Nepantla Studio), also known as The Nepantla Project.[248] Villa Montalvo, an arts center located on a one hundred seventy-five acre estate in Saratoga, California, partnered with MACLA (Movimiento de Arte y Cultura Latino Americano) a community based arts organization in San José, California, that primarily serves Latina/o and Chicana/o populations. Women artists from a range of disciplines and national origins participated in a five-week

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[246] AnaLouise Keating, ed., *Gloria E. Anzaldúa: Interviews/Entrevistas* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 247.
[247] Gloria E. Anzaldúa, "Chicana Artists: Exploring Nepantla, El Lugar de la Frontera," *NACLA Report on the Americas,* 27:1 (July-August 1993).
[248] For accounts of the residency at Montalvo and the exhibition, see Chiori Santiago, "Intersecting Creativity, Latina Artists Share Ideas, Images at Montalvo Haven," *San Jose Mercury News*, October 22, 1995, Julie Reynolds, "The Nepantla Experiment," *El Andar,* November 1995, 10.

residency program and produced works of art in response to Anzaldúa's theory of Nepantla.[249] During the program, Anzaldúa consciously constructed an integration of theory and praxis as the artists worked in their studios by day and discussed life, conceptual, and creative issues by night. The residency culminated in an open studio evening and an exhibition hosted at MACLA.

Nepantla: Final Thoughts

In the preface to Anzaldúa's final work, she brought back the word "bridge" from her 1981 publication and again used it as a powerful metaphor. She mentioned various examples of bridges, both natural and human-made ones, and described them metaphorically as "…thresholds to other realities, archetypal, primal symbols of shifting consciousness."[250] These bridges "… span liminal (threshold) spaces between worlds, spaces I call nepantla."[251] While she cited neither Turner nor Van Gennep, she stated that she uses Nepantla to "theorize liminality" and introduced the idea of *Nepantleras* or "those who facilitate passages between worlds."[252] In an interview published just months before her death, Anzaldúa discussed areas of commonality and difference between Native Americans and Chicana/os, the spirituality and healing

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[249] Under the direction of Anzaldúa, visual artists Santa Contreras Barraza, Liliana Wilson Grez, and Cristina Luna participated in *Taller Nepantla* along with playwright Isabel Juarez.
[250] Gloria E. Anzaldúa, "(Un)natural bridges, (Un)safe spaces," in *this bridge we call home: radical visions for transformation*, ed. Gloria E. Anzaldúa and AnaLouise Keating (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), 1.
[251] Ibid.
[252] Ibid.

aspects of her writing, and provided a more in-depth statement on the function and characteristic features of nepantleras.[253] Nepantleras possess heightened powers of insight that they use to serve themselves and their communities. They think and act on behalf of the entire world and hold no allegiance to any race, ethnicity, country, or continent. As contemporary *chamanas* (shamans), they possess a flexible point of view that allows them insight and perception beyond most people. Their heightened ability allows them to discern limiting patterns of behavior and indicate areas that require change, both on a personal and global level. Anzaldúa considers them "supreme border crossers" who can easily move between various cultures, realities, and worlds. The dissertation views the characters Six-Deer meets in the codex as Nepantleras especially when Anzaldúa describes them as, "…agents of awakening, [who serve to] inspire and challenge others to deeper awareness, greater *conocimiento*, serve as reminders of each other's search for wholeness of being."[254]

For Anzaldúa, Nepantla was a living and breathing philosophy, one that developed and changed in tandem with her growth as a feminist woman of color, a queer, an artist, and a spiritual activist. Like Turner and his concern with the middle stage of liminality, Nepantla formed a central theoretical thread in many of her

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[253] Inés Hernández-Avila and Domino Pérez, "Email Interview: Gloria E. Anzaldúa," *Studies in American Indian Literature* 15 (Fall 2003-Winter 2004): 19-20.
[254] Ibid.: 19.

writings. Nepantla informs this study though the following aspects: 1) Nepantla as a state of consciousness, a state of being, and a place of contradiction; 2) Nepantla as a way of creating knowledge and constructing new epistemologies that provide understanding and insight into how reality is formed; 3) Nepantla as a way of explaining, interpreting, and making sense of the world; 4) Nepantla as a place and means of transformation accessible to anyone who wants to change themselves; and lastly, 5) Nepantleras as those individuals or beings[255] who assist the person-in-transition. The study suggests that Six-Deer remains in a state of Nepantla or liminality for the majority of the journey and that the characters she meets often function as Nepantleras, those beings who help her cross multiple borders and support her quest for Aztlán.

***Codex Delilah:* Journey as Rite of Passage and Initiation Ritual**

The previous section considered Gloria Anzaldúa's initial conception and development of mestiza consciousness, Nepantla, and Nepantleras, demonstrated their relevance to contemporary Chicana identity and the discussion of *Codex Delilah* as sacred and transformative journey, and indicated their presence within the codex. It traced Victor Turner's theoretical amplifications of the concept of liminality,

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[255] Because of Anzaldúa's interest in spiritual realms and modes of alternative consciousness, her choice of the word "beings" likely implies entities other than simply human beings. Montoya demonstrates this visually in Panel 7 of the codex and the dissertation discusses an entity that serves as one of Six-Deer's nepantleras later in this chapter.

demonstrated how liminality pertains to rites of initiation, and showed Turner's development of Van Gennep's earlier work. The preceding part of the study opened with a discussion of Van Gennep's initial formulation of rites of passage and his request for further investigation of a secondary and autonomous system that functioned within these rites of transition. The next section of the dissertation discusses *Codex Delilah* as a rite of passage and initiatory ritual. It compares their structures and individual elements to those found in Six-Deer's journey. This section demonstrates that the events Montoya portrays in *Codex Delilah* constitute the three distinct stages of a rite of passage by outlining each stage in various panels of the work. In addition to a rite of passage, the study also suggests that the journey functions as a rite of initiation and demonstrates parallels between Six-Deer's journey and initiatory ritual when important.

***Codex Delilah*: Rites of Separation**

Panel 1: The Presentation of the Quest

Six-Deer's journey begins in 1401 when the young child seeks out the holy woman of her village because she feels uncertain about her ability to serve her community. Destined to become a healer, Six-Deer demonstrates her latent talents when she senses an imbalance, a disharmony among elemental forces of her world that propels her toward Ix-Chel. In Panel 1, Six-Deer experiences what Joseph Campbell terms "The Call to Adventure," the moment that signals the onset of the separation

phase in rites of passage.[256] Six-Deer experiences this call to adventure as a desire for the full realization and expression of her healing powers. In Campbell's terminology, Ix-Chel serves as Herald, one who announces the quest. The elder's presence in the narrative also indicates the unfolding of a significant undertaking.[257] Ix-Chel understands that the child can realize herself as healer only after undergoing a series of trials. To accomplish this end, the old woman presents Six-Deer with the quest, instructs her to seek Aztlán, and directs the child to speak to Crow-Woman, Ix-Chel's wise and powerful friend. Montoya positions Crow-Woman as the source of wisdom and the connection to the gods and Aztlán as the culmination of the journey.

The rites of separation Six-Deer performs occur only in the first panel of the codex. Montoya does not reveal any lengthy preparation for the journey in either the images or the text. The child does not assume special clothes, prepare special foods, or perform in any other leave-taking ritual. Instead, the artist uses Ix-Chel's gift of an amulet, a flint knife, as the primary image to represent Six-Deer's separation rites. The gift-giving ceremony performed by Ix-Chel indicates the end of a certain portion of Six-Deer's life (Fig 3.1). With advice and words of caution, Ix-Chel prepares the young girl to separate from her current role of child and to begin her transformation into an adult and fully realized healer.

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[256] Campbell, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, 49-58.
[257] Ibid., 51.

The physical act of leaving her village forms the second important aspect of Six-Deer's rites of separation. Territorial passage physically removes the initiate from family and home and symbolizes a kind of death, as the dying of the child self begins. Six-Deer's child self must die in order to become what historian of religions Mircea Eliade terms, one "who *knows*."[258] The new and often strange physical environment encountered, generally in sharp contrast to the initiate's home locale, represents death, and generally takes the form of a dark forest or jungle. Montoya follows this convention when she pictures a seemingly peaceful jungle scene in Register 3 of Panels 1 and 2. With the words, "Go now and don't look back," Ix-Chel sends Six-Deer on her quest and the separation phase of Six-Deer's rite of passage concludes. Clutching her power object tightly in her grasp, the young girl moves out of the panel and crosses the threshold to another world.

Codex Delilah: Rites of Transition and Liminality

Panel 2: The First Test and the Presentation the *Sacra*

As her footsteps lead away from her teacher, away from the village of her birth, away from everything known and comfortable, Six-Deer enters the second stage of her rite of passage, that of marge or limen, the stage of transition. Throughout the next five panels of the work, Six-Deer progressively dies to her child self as she

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[258] Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1957), 188-189.

increasingly gains awareness, power, and the ability to discriminate. In these panels, Six-Deer encounters numerous guides, that the study positions as Nepantleras or "willing helpers," those female iconic figures that support or compel her rise to consciousness.[259] Each willing helper presents her with a challenge, test, or trial that she must confront to reach the next step in her developing awareness.

In the second panel, Montoya thrusts Six-Deer into the chaos of the Conquest. The young girl has traveled through the rainforest or jungle environs of the Mexican state of Chiapas and has emerged at Quiahuítzlan on the Gulf Coast near Veracruz. Montoya dates this panel 1521, the year that Spanish Conquistador Hernán Cortés began his march of conquest from Veracruz to Tenochtitlán. As a liminal being or person-in-transition, Six-Deer begins her transformation by plunging into a world of utter turmoil, overwhelming violence, and indiscriminate destruction. Montoya confronts Six-Deer with the destruction of her cultural capital[260] and way of life illustrated repeatedly throughout the panel.

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[259] The Fourteen Holy Helpers, also known as the Fourteen Auxiliary Saints, attained cult status in 14th century Rhineland and their following spread to Germany, Hungary, and Sweden before declining in the 1700s. This group of saints served as intercessors against disease and believers invoked them during the final moments of life to insure salvation. Visual representations often placed the saints surrounding the Virgin Mary or around the figure of the Christ Child held on St. Christopher's shoulders. I owe a special thanks to Dr. Joan A. Holladay for an early conversation on medieval parallels to elements found in *Codex Delilah* and for this reference. For more information, see David Hugh Farmer, "Fourteen Holy Helpers," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 167. Campbell must have been aware of these saints because he uses the phrase "willing helper" when discussing Dante's *Virgil*. Please see Campbell, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, 22.

[260] Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital," in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. John Richardson (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986).

Van Gennep notes that, in rites of passage that move an individual from adolescence into adulthood, initiands often experience some form of ritualized suffering or physical pain. Circumcision, scarification, the cutting or shaving of hair, or other alterations in their physical body mirror the initiate's changes within the life cycle. While we do not see Six-Deer undergo physical suffering or torture at the hands of the Conquistadors, Montoya includes many of these images in the background of this panel. While Six-Deer may not have experienced these hardships, she would have observed them as she traveled westward through the eastern coastal area from Quiahuítzlan to the site of the central conflict at Tenochtitlán, the capital city of the Mexica/Aztec Empire at the time of the Conquest. In fact, her journey replicates the route taken by Hernán Cortés. Similar to Sherman's march to the sea during the American Civil War, Cortés destroyed almost everything in his wake during his march from Cempoala and Quiahuítzlan near the Gulf Coast of Veracruz to Central Mexico. Under threat of force and, rather than face total annihilation, many indigenous people joined the Spanish commander's armies. Cortés also capitalized on the hostility that some indigenous groups felt toward the Mexica and gathered additional allies along the way to create a large army that ultimately succeeded in conquering Mesoamerica.

Images of death abound in this panel. As discussed in Chapter 2, Montoya reproduced drawings from earlier codices that show indigenous people hung from trees, set upon by dogs, and mutilated through dismemberment. She also pictured the

destruction of the central Mexica temple (*El Templo Mejor*) through fire, the site that later becomes Mexico City's *Catedral*. Eliade declared that, "Death is the preliminary condition for any mystical regeneration" and found that, during initiation, symbols of birth generally exist in combination with those of death.[261] Turner's socially based findings of liminaries treated simultaneously as newly born and dead echo Eliade's religious perspective. In Register 2 of *Codex Delilah's* second panel, Montoya incorporated these spiritual and societal symbolic structures. In the midst of unmitigating death and profound destruction, Montoya shows that Six-Deer carries new life, not only the budding of her new adulthood, but also potential human life. Although most people understand the creation of the mestiza as a result the rape of indigenous women by Spanish conquistadors rather than through consensual relations, Montoya presented Six-Deer's pregnancy in a positive light.[262] She linked human creation, effected consensually or not, to a larger theme of redemption carried out by this panel's main characters, Llora-Llora-Malinche, and Six-Deer.[263]

Montoya fashioned the character Llora as the primary instrument to communicate the physical and psychic suffering inflicted on the peoples of Mesoamerica during the conquest. The artist formed this character by conflating two

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[261] Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 190-191.
[262] Octavio Paz, *The Labyrinth of Solitude: Life and Thought of Mexico*, trans. Lysander Kemp (New York: Grove Press, 1961). Feminists and others have roundly criticized Paz's view of women and especially his characterization of Malintzin as traitor.
[263] The dissertation discusses this panel's themes of creation as part of redemption in Chapter 4.

women, one legendary or mythic (La Llorona), and one, an historical person who has attained legendary status (Malinche). La Llorona, the mythic Wailing Woman, provided Montoya the "Llora" portion of the character's name. In Spanish, the word *llora* literally means "cry" from *llorar,* meaning to cry. I argue that Montoya and García-Camarillo's choice of this name refers to the wails of grief La Llorona sounds because of the loss of her children. The second part of the name the artist and poet gave this character referred to the historic Malintzin Tenépal, also known as Malinche, the educated Maya woman who served as Hernán Cortés's translator during the conquest.

What does Six-Deer gain from this experience? How do these events further her quest? Within the narrative, Montoya locates Six-Deer as one of the last people to experience pre-Contact Mesoamerican culture and history. As previously stated, Turner found that, in rituals of initiation, community elders powerfully impressed the culture's values upon initiands through terrifying performances and other equally commanding methods. By heralding the conquest and disclosing the destruction of their ways of life, Llora unveils the sacra to Six-Deer through "monstrous" means. This character shows Six-Deer what is most precious through witnessing its obliteration. Additionally, the conquest's toll on the language, history, spiritual knowledges, and cultural practices present at this time elevates the importance of oral tradition. Consequently, Six-Deer's memory serves as the archive of this cultural

capital, an idea the study explores further in the next chapter. In this panel, Six-Deer confronts the sacra, the events test her resolve, and, despite this first terrifying obstacle, she continues her journey.

Codex Delilah: Rites of Transition and Liminality

Panel 4: A Further Trial, the Re-Conquest, and Six-Deer's Assertion of Agency

In 1598, seventy-seven years after the conquest, Spanish settlers ventured to the northernmost regions of Nueva España (New Spain), as Mexico was then called. They displaced, conquered, and colonized the Pueblans, the indigenous people living in the area. Less than one hundred years later in 1680, the Pueblan peoples banded together under their leader Popé and staged a successful revolt against Spanish incursion. Driven south by the Pueblans, the Spanish colonists retreated to the site of today's Juárez, Mexico, and El Paso, Texas. For the next twelve years, the Pueblans resumed their way of life and continued their cultural practices suppressed by the Spanish. However, in 1692, in what was termed the "Reconquest," the Spanish settlers returned to Northern New Mexico. The accompanying soldiers carried standard bearers emblazoned with the image of La Conquistadora, conquering Virgin and "Patroness of New Mexico," reconquered the rightful indigenous inhabitants and quickly re-established their settlements.[264] As a result, the figure of La Conquistadora

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[264] For information on the settlement of New Mexico and the Reconquest, see David J. Weber,

is an important religious icon and figure in the history of New Mexico. As discussed in Chapter 2, Montoya's version of this figure "dominates" the visual space in the second register of this panel. As a New Mexican, Montoya makes several subtle references to this figure, the legacy of the initial Spanish incursion, and the Reconquest throughout the panel that uninformed viewers would miss.

In Panel 4, Six-Deer moves ahead one hundred-fifty years to 1680 and meets the character Adora-la Conquistadora in El Paso del Norte, literally "the pass" or "the way to the north." Adora, Montoya's adaptation of La Conquistadora, criticizes Six-Deer for her appearance, her name, and her quest. Adora demands of Six-Deer, "Don't you understand that the old ways have to die so that the new ways can prosper? Adora wants to teach a lesson to the Pueblans that she describes as "damn fools" and "savages." She urges Six-Deer to join her forces. With the meeting of these two characters, Montoya portrays another incarnation of the direct conflict between indigenous and Catholic religions. While the syncretization of these practices began immediately after the conquest, some continued in other forms while many practices simply went underground. Using religious traditions, Montoya again evokes the initiatory symbols of birth, transformation, and death.

Foreigners in Their Native Land: Historical Roots of the Mexican Americans (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1973), John R. Chávez, *The Lost Land: The Chicano Image of the Southwest* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984), Erlinda Gonzáles-Berry and Davíd R. Maciel, eds., *The Contested Homeland: A Chicano History of New Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000).

This stage of the journey forms another trial, one of the greatest tests of Six-Deer's resolve and personal strength. Adora threatens her with death, telling the child that, if she does not join Adora in the Re-conquest, Six-Deer will die. This is a decisive moment for Six-Deer. She has the opportunity to pass, to deny her indigenous heritage and identity. Although Six-Deer acted on her own behalf when she sought out Ix-Chel in the first panel, this is her first definitive act of personal agency. With a resounding "¡NO!," the young girl refuses to join Adora's forces and, while tears stream down her face, she continues her solitary pilgrimage to Aztlán (Fig. 3.2). This test represents not only Six-Deer's physical survival, but her spiritual and cultural survival as well.

Codex Delilah: Rites of Transition and Liminality

Panel 5: Crossing the Threshold to Adulthood

In Montoya's visual depiction, Six-Deer appears as a young girl throughout the codex, yet the text in Panel 5 states that she is no longer a child. Therefore, the viewer understands that during the journey Six- Deer transforms from child to adult. To emphasize the ceremonial function of Six-Deer's journey, I establish parallels between Six-Deer's experience, rites of initiation, and the contemporary observance of *la fiesta de quinceañera*.

La Fiesta de Quinceañera: The "Making" of a Mexican Woman

La fiesta de quinceañera is a cultural and religious ceremony that recognizes

the coming of age of Mexican and Mexican-American[265] girls and marks their entrance into adulthood. At the end of a two-year study, Chicana anthropologist Karen Mary Davalos concluded that the quinceañera is an opportunity "…to practice one's ethnic culture in an event that *makes* a girl into a woman, but more importantly *makes* her into a Mexican woman."[266] Davalos' reference to this rite of initiation as the process by which girls are "made" women emphasizes the importance of initiation rituals and echoes findings of other scholars. Mark Searle reminds us that the early Christian writer Tertullian declared in his *Apologeticum* from 197 CE, "Christians are made, not born." Searle states that a person does not become a Christian merely by being born into a Christian family, but that this change only takes place through a process of initiation.[267] Similarly, Turner notes that sister ethnographer A. I. Richards recorded that the African Bemba use the phrase "growing a girl" to describe those undergoing puberty rites. He states further, "the Bemba and the Shilluk of the Sudan…see the status or condition embodied or incarnate…in the person. To "grow" a girl into a woman is to effect an ontological transformation… It is the ritual and the

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[265] I use Mexican-American interchangeably for Chicana in this instance solely for poetic reasons.
[266] Karen Mary Davalos, "La Quinceañera and the Keen-say-an-Yair-uh: The Politics of Making Gender and Ethnic Identity in Chicago," *Voces: A Journal of Chicana/Latina Studies* 1:1 (1997): 114.
[267] Mark Searle, "The Rites of Christian Initiation," in *Betwixt and Between: Patterns of Masculine and Feminine Initiation*, ed. Louise Carus Mahdi, Steven Foster, and Meredith Little (LaSalle: Open Court, 1987), 457.

esoteric teachings which grows girls and makes men."[268] According to this view, the woman that the child will potentially become already exists inside her. The ritual releases this inherent potential. Turner's colleague, the North American anthropologist Barbara Myerhoff, affirms these observations on the importance of ceremony stating,

> "Neither are men and women simply born: they are "made" by ceremonies; nor are they truly sexual, adult beings until certain social conditions have been fulfilled… A woman may be "initiated" into fertility by her society before she is allowed to mate, her social definition as "woman" provided by ceremony…"[269]

This study views Six-Deer's journey as an initiatory ritual and understands the journey as a ceremony that transforms Six-Deer, not only from a child to an adult, but also from an apprehensive and unrealized initiate to a powerful and confident healer. Following the previous scholars, the journey "makes" Six-Deer a woman and a healer.

La Quinceañera: Impetus, Structure, and Symbols

When a young Chicana or Mexican girl approaches the age of fifteen, the girl's family, parish, and community recognize her coming of age in a public celebration. Thorough consideration of la quinceañera would reveal a wide diversity in its practice depending upon place of origin, geographic location, financial means, and personal

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[268] Turner, *The Forest of Symbols*, 102.
[269] Barbara Myerhoff, "Rites of Passage: Process and Paradox," in *Celebration: Studies in Festivity and Ritual*, ed. Victor Turner (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1982), 109-110.

preference.[270] However, the research recounts only a brief outline of the event to acquaint the reader with its general format and symbolic content.

In her work on life cycle rituals of Latinas and Chicanas, Chicana scholar Norma Cantú researched this ceremony both in her home community of Laredo, Texas, and directly across the border in Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas, México. She used fieldwork conducted from 1994 to 1997, published accounts of quinceañeras, and recollections from her own coming of age ceremony in 1962 as the basis of her study.[271] Cantú found that the observance of la fiesta de quinceañera in these border regions functioned as an individual and community celebration, an affirmation of ethnic identity, a ritual of thanksgiving, and a rite of initiation that recognized the transition from young girl to adult woman. Significantly, she determined that border celebrations of la quinceañera maintained and demonstrated the ceremony's Mexican "roots" and simultaneously, continued a "living tradition" observed for more than a hundred years in the United States. Cantú found that, although the tradition changes in

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[270] For example, two years ago, I attended a quinceañera in the Austin area (Texas) celebrated at a local Lutheran (rather than the more typical Catholic) church. Central American quinceañera traditions often favor pink or other pastel colors and, because the family was originally from El Salvador, the young woman wore a pink dress. In contrast, in many Mexican and most American observances of this ceremony, the fifteen year-old female generally wears a white dress.

[271] Norma Elia Cantú, "La Quinceañera: Towards an Analysis of a Life Cycle Ritual," *Southern Folklore* 56:1 (1999): 73-101. Cantú is a Professor of English at the University of Texas, San Antonio. See her important border narrative and her account of the emerging rite of *cincuentañera* in Norma Elia Cantú, *Canicula: Snapshots of a Girlhood en la Frontera* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), Norma Elia Cantú, "Chicana Life-Cycle Rituals," in *Chicana Traditions: Continuity and Change*, ed. Norma E. Cantú and Olga Nájera Ramírez (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 15-34.

response to current political and social realities, it retains many of its fundamental ceremonial elements.

In her work, Cantú provides a detailed account of la quinceañera and outlines the ritual sequence, the participants and the roles they perform, and the clothing, accessories, and food associated with this rite. The ceremony generally includes a Catholic *misa de acción de gracias* (Mass of Thanksgiving), followed by a procession accompanied by a ritual dance, and a celebratory meal. After the Mass, participants and community members retire to a hall for the reception and a fiesta meal. The involved parties (the girl, her escort, and attendants) walk through a flower-covered *arco* or arch, often fashioned as an open wire frame that forms the literal representation of the "threshold" being crossed. In a later section of this chapter, I illustrate a parallel move by Six-Deer in *Codex Delilah.* The arch functions as a symbol that concretely manifests the girl's transformation from childhood to womanhood. Here the physical passage through the arch marks and visualizes the life cycle change. After the master of ceremonies presents and introduces the members of the procession, the young woman and her father perform the first dance together before the guests follow suit.

In the celebrations Cantú describes, the girl receives a number of symbolic gifts that mark the occasion including a missal, a rosary, a gold religious medal, a ring, a bracelet, and earrings. The missal and rosary given in a quinceañera mirror those

received at a Catholic girl's First Holy Communion, generally celebrated around age seven or eight. However, the missal and rosary received at age fifteen are adult versions that the young woman will use for the remainder of her life. Parents or other family members often personalize the ring, usually the girl's birthstone, and the bracelet by inscribing them with the girl's initials and the date of her quinceañera. A close female relative purchases the religious medal, most frequently, one commemorating the Virgin of Guadalupe, and presents it to the girl before the Thanksgiving Mass. During the Mass, the medal, missal, and rosary receive a special blessing by the priest.[272] The medal serves as a means of protection, both spiritual and physical, dedicates the girl to the Virgin, and serves to affirm both her faith and her Mexicanness, because Mexicans understand the Virgin of Guadalupe as the mother of the Mexican people.

In the previously mentioned earlier study from 1996, Karen Mary Davalos interviewed Mexican-American girls and women in Chicago, Illinois, on the subject of la quinceañera. She examined its observance from public and private perspectives with Catholic priests and journalists forming the public discourse of the celebration, while young girls and their mothers contributed private accounts. Davalos sought to portray current performances of the quinceañera rather than to provide a definitive description

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[272] Cantú, "La Quinceañera:," 88, 92.

of the ritual. Her subjects insisted that there was no single understanding or experience of the fiesta as "the" traditional mode of observance, so Davalos recorded a variety of practices. The girls and women Davalos spoke with tended to follow how their extended family had previously celebrated the ritual. They considered how an aunt or older sister had honored the occasion, rather than how other local families kept the custom, and used these family precedents to structure their observance.[273]

Davalos reported that public discourse presented the quinceañera as an "extension" of Catholic sacraments (understood as a form of popular religious practice rather than a theologically mandated one), as a rite of passage, and as a "traditional" practice that demonstrated historical continuity. However, her informants valued the ceremony because it affirmed Mexican culture and their Mexicanness, while providing them with an occasion that codified gender, ethnicity, sexuality, and faith. Davalos found that despite the variety of practices, those interviewed viewed the quinceañera as "…something that has to be done because of who we are" and as a way of "holding onto your roots." According to Davalos, not only does the quinceañera provide a space and place to display and perform practice one's ethnicity but as she states, "It [the quinceañera] is an event that leads girls to discover and experience themselves as

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[273] Karen Mary Davalos, "*La Quinceañera*: Making Gender and Ethnic Identities," *Frontiers* 16:2-3 (1996): 117-118.

women, Mexicans, Catholics, and adults."[274]

Codex Delilah: Rites of Transition and Liminality

Panel 5: The River as Symbolic Threshold

In the fifth panel of *Codex Delilah,* Six-Deer washes her face in the *Río Bravo* (Brave River), also known as the *Río Grande* (Big River), the border between the United States of Mexico and the United States of North America. Seeing her face reflected in the river, she notices that she looks different. In the text at the bottom of this panel, Montoya and García-Camarillo describe her as having lost her "baby fat." When Six-Deer says, "I think it's my eyes that seem so different. Could it be that I'm learning to see truth?" the viewer understands that the journey continues to change Six-Deer.

At the river's edge, circa 1910, she meets the raspy voiced Lucha-Adelucha, a large and physically powerful woman whose name comes from the word *luchar* meaning "to struggle." Montoya imagines Lucha as her version of La Adelita or the female soldier who fought in the Mexican Revolution from 1910 to 1920. Lucha tells Six-Deer that the enemies of liberty and justice are everywhere, no longer just in Mexico and the United States. In this way, Montoya and García-Camarillo implicate Lucha as a symbol of women's active involvement in struggles for freedom worldwide

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[274] Ibid.: 114.

and expand our understanding of her importance within and beyond the codex. While her visual depiction encourages a specific historical location, her symbolic value crosses multiple borders. Alluding to the cost of border crossing, Montoya appropriated images from José Guadalupe Posada, printmaker and political satirist of the elite classes during revolutionary Mexico. Placed significantly between two repeated photographs of Lucha in the uppermost section of the register, piles of skulls warn of the danger encountered by those who attempt the crossing. The doubled representation of Lucha's body frames this page accompanied by a prominent text, "Vámonos pal Norte (Let us go to the north)," that declares Six-Deer and Lucha's intention to traverse the border together. Montoya communicates the warrior's personal power and courage when she illustrates Lucha literally laughing in the face of danger, her doubled image flanked with terrifying images of death.

We understand this character as a *soldadera* (female soldier) primarily from the brace of *bandilleras* (bullet cartridge belts) that crosses her chest, rather than other elements of female costume current in Mexico during early decades of the twentieth century. Photographs from the Casasola Archives demonstrate a range of clothing choices taken by women of the Revolutionary period in Mexico (1910-1920). Women of the elite classes worn full-length dresses of various luxury fabrics such as silk, velvet, and lace, while women who actively participated in the revolutionary struggle as soldiers or supporters wore white cotton blouses and dark skirts often overlaid with

rebozos (shawls). Some *soldaderas* adopted male dress including pants, heavy boots, shirts rather than blouses, and hats.[275]

In addition to the symbolic value of costume and demeanor, I suggest Montoya uses location as an important tool to complicate the significance of Lucha-Adelucha. Since we associate La Adelita with Guerrero and other central Mexican states more frequently than with the Río Bravo, the artist may be using place as an important symbol. Far from the area of the Revolution's primary battles, the artist places the visual and textual narrative directly on the site of crossing, the Río Bravo, in order to demonstrate the multi-layered issues of border negotiation.

What borders do Six-Deer and Lucha-Adelucha cross? As a defining aspect of initiation, rites of passage often include a corresponding territorial passage or movement through space. When Six-Deer observes her body reflected in the Río Bravo, she becomes aware that she is no longer a child. Therefore, this panel demonstrates another important stage of her rite of passage and initiation ritual. If we understand the river as symbolically representing the threshold, then we understand this crossing as the ceremonial recognition of her transition from child to adult and the negotiation of "Mexican" and "American" identities and cultures. Although Montoya does not alter Six-Deer's physical appearance in her visual portrayal, we understand

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[275] For important research on the analysis of images of women during the Revolutionary period, see Addison, "Photographing the 'Woman Alone': The Performance of Gender in the Mexican Revolution".

that the young girl is transforming into a young woman. The physical crossing of the border concretizes and symbolically represents Six-Deer's crossing from childhood to adulthood and functions as her fiesta de quinceañera. Further, the figure of Lucha-Adelucha also exemplifies liminality and represents those, who while and after crossing, remain in a constant state of flux. Therefore, I suggest Lucha-Adelucha as the epitome of Anzaldúa's nepantlera, the person who guides Six-Deer through numerous transitions including literal and figurative borders and states of consciousness. This figures also exemplifies a potential model for the young girl. In Montoya's depiction, Lucha-Adelucha extends her hand to Six-Deer and together they cross this dangerous and "fruitful" site.[276]

***Codex Delilah*: Rites of Incorporation**

Panel 7: The Eternal[277] and (Future) Return

Arnold Van Gennep found that rites of incorporation often follow rites of purification. The purification process separates or removes any remaining vestiges of the previous state or condition and prepares the initiatory subject for the return to her original environment.[278] In the final panel of *Codex Delilah*, Six-Deer climbs to the

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[276] Turner, *The Forest of Symbols*, 110.
[277] Here I refer to the work of Rumanian historian of religions Mircea Eliade (1907-1986) and his studies that explore cyclical and Western linear notions of time and space. See Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane,* Mircea Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return or Cosmos and History*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971).
[278] Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, 20-21.

top of Sandía Mountain, just outside of Albuquerque, New Mexico. Montoya positions this mountain as Aztlán, the place of Six-Deer's origins, the site of wisdom and knowledge. Six-Deer has achieved part of her quest, she has found both Crow-Woman and Aztlán, but Six-Deer also encounters her most important challenge or trial because Crow-Woman, the proposed culmination of her quest, lies gravely ill and near death.

Although the elder attempts to send Six-Deer away, the young woman refuses and instead, asks to ritually purify Crow-Woman. This act demonstrates another result of Six-Deer's journey, she assumes the role of healer for the first time. Although Montoya does not visually present Six-Deer's reincorporation into her previous temporal or physical environment, she and García-Camarillo state in the text that Six-Deer's journey ends with a reincorporation. Buoyed by the young woman's presence, but still in a weakened condition, Crow-Woman asks Six-Deer to remain with her. Six-Deer replies, "I will stay with you in Aztlán, my teacher, but when everything on the earth is in balance, I must return home." We do not see Six-Deer return to her village and can only speculate her impact on her home community, but we understand that she not only has fulfilled the quest presented to her in the first panel, but has healed herself, Crow-Woman, and the world. This concludes the comparative analysis between the journey undertaken by Six-Deer and rites of passage and rituals of initiation.

Codex Delilah: Journey as Sacred Pilgrimage

One's culture and society generally mandates rites of initiation and they mark changes in biological stages such as birth, sexual maturity, and death. Rites of passage recognize both these natural cycles and earned changes in social position. In contrast, pilgrimages are generally voluntary affairs, freely chosen by the individual. Richard W. Barber tells us that many contemporary anthropologists consider pilgrimage as a "replacement" for initiation rites.[279] While Barber acknowledges the similarities between pilgrimage and these rites, he ultimately defines pilgrimage as more important to the individual than society as a whole. Initiation rites bring the individual into an acceptable role in the larger community, while pilgrimage fulfills an individual need. Turner agrees that pilgrimages are generally voluntary, but points out that the Catholic Church sometimes proscribed them as "punishments" for specific "crimes."[280] He and Davíd Carasco liken pilgrimage to rites of passage and initiatory rituals and find that pilgrimage leads to both social and spiritual renewal.[281]

Pilgrimage: Impetus, Structure, and Symbols

Members of every belief, faith, and religious practice throughout the world

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[279] Richard W. Barber, *Pilgrimages* (Suffolk: Woodbridge, 1991), 2.
[280] Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), 175.
[281] Ibid., 182, Davíd Carrasco, "Those Who Go on a Sacred Journey: The Shapes and Diversity of Pilgrimages," in *Pilgrimage*, ed. Virgil Elizondo and Sean Freyne (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1996), 13-14.

have performed pilgrimages from ancient times to the present. This study defines the term pilgrimage in its broadest sense -- a journey undertaken by an individual or group toward a location considered sacred by that person and/or others. I use the term pilgrimage as another means to "read" Six-Deer as pilgrim or seeker and apply the elements of pilgrimage as framework to investigate her journey. Individuals or groups undertake a pilgrimage for a number of reasons generally unrelated to life cycle stages or change in social position.[282] Pilgrims often choose the journey as a form of self-initiated suffering or penance for a perceived misdeed or sin. At other times, they conduct pilgrimages in response to an answered prayer or request. One makes a *manda*, or vow to perform a particular act if God grants one's petition. Pilgrimage, then, may be a fulfillment of a vow made to God, the Virgin of Guadalupe, or recognized Christian or folk saint. Pilgrimage may also be conducted in hope of a cure, the physical sufferings of the trip offered to God in exchange for healing requested for one's self or others. Pilgrims often participate to deepen or renew their faith, the pilgrimage affording them the time and opportunity to contemplate spiritual matters outside of the routines and pressures of daily life.

The spiritual and cultural phenomenon of pilgrimage shares a similar structure

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[282] Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors,* Victor Turner and Edith Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture: Anthropological Perspectives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), Barber, *Pilgrimages*.

with Van Gennep's rites of passage. In the first phase of pilgrimage, the pilgrim separates from their physical location, class position, employment, family, and regular daily routine to join a group of like-minded individuals in pursuit of physical or spiritual healing. To prepare for the journey, pilgrims often alter their appearance by putting on special garments or carrying various symbols that orient or focus them on the task ahead.[283] Christian pilgrims may adapt raiment and symbols of the patron saint of pilgrims, the Holy Child of Atocha (*El Santo Niño de Atocha*), his cloak (*esclavina*), staff, and shell.[284] This change in appearance symbolically prefigures the deeper internal changes to come.

In the second phase, the pilgrim enters into a space and place of transition (liminality) that forms the process of the journey. Turner states that "pilgrimages are liminal phenomena"[285] and thinks that the liminary period of pilgrimages is often longer than that of initiation rites because some pilgrimages take months to perform.[286] The individual accepts the privations encountered along the pilgrimage trail as

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[283] Barber, *Pilgrimages*, 2, Carrasco, "Those Who Go on a Sacred Journey," 15.
[284] The pilgrim uses the shell to dip water along the way. Zacatecas, Mexico, is a pilgrimage site devoted to *El Santo Niño de Atocha.* In the Mexican image, the child sits in a wooden chair, wears a broad brimmed, feathered hat, a cloak, open sandals, and carries a staff holding a gourd for water and basket, while a scallop shell adorns his cloak. In contrast, Spain's Christ Child, found in the Atocha parish of Madrid, is dressed as a pilgrim to Santiago de Compostela and rests in his mother's arms. The scallop shell found in the Mexican representations also references the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela and St. James as described later in this chapter.
[285] Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors*, 166.
[286] Ibid., 182.

necessary aspects of the journey. These adverse conditions can also serve as a leveling device among group members that promotes a sense of humility and community. The privations – hunger or fasting, exposure to inclement weather, the physical rigors of traversing the landscape, sexual abstinence - increase the individual's sensitivity to the spiritual dimension and can act as a cleansing process preparing the individual for intense culmination of the journey at the pilgrimage site.

In the third phase, after the conclusion of the pilgrimage, the individual goes back to their community and resumes their familial and societal role. While they return to the same geographic location, their interior state often remains permanently changed. Therefore, the third phase of pilgrimage exemplifies Van Gennep's understanding of re-aggregation because pilgrims return into their former life. At the same time, they carry a new inner reality that influences their subsequent behavior and thought processes.

In addition to sharing a similar structure, pilgrimage and rites of passage share an initiatory quality.[287] As previously described, pilgrims enter into the liminal phase of pilgrimage through a process of humiliation effected by the physical, emotional and spiritual rigor of the process. This humbling process parallels initiatory rites of puberty where the young person separates from their family and community and undergoes an

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[287] Turner and Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage*, 8.

intense period of trials and education about their new societal role. As previously outlined, the trials and subsequent indoctrination into cultural and social norms occurs through symbolic acts and objects (sacra). Similarly, throughout the pilgrimage, the pilgrim encounters opportunities for deeper connection with their deity and their faith.

Several scholars note that as a pilgrim approaches the pilgrimage site an intensification of symbols and symbolic processes often occur.[288] Turner states, "As in the liminality of initiation rites, such an actor-pilgrim is confronted by sequences of sacred objects and participates in symbolic activities…in the pilgrim's movement toward the…central shrine…the route becomes increasingly sacralized." During the initial portion of the pilgrimage, the seeker finds primarily secular and quotidian sights. Then increasingly, religious or sacred symbols and/or entities appear. Lastly, "…in the final stages, the route itself becomes a sacred, sometime mythical journey till almost every landmark and ultimately every step is a condensed, multivocal symbol…"[289] Eventually, a sacred environment engulfs the pilgrim.

El Sanctuario de Chimayó

Chimayó, a pilgrimage site in Northern New Mexico, exemplifies this intensification of sacred symbols along the pilgrimage route. When the pilgrim walks along the path to the hillside site of the Sanctuary of Chimayó, they encounter a *Vía*

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[288] Ibid.
[289] Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors*, 197-198.

Crucis, a Way of the Cross. The Stations of the Cross are a Catholic religious practice that recounts Christ's Passion and death on the cross. They consist of fourteen separate places, marked by paintings, wall plaques, or shrines that visually depict progressive moments in the Passion. At Chimayó, as the seeker travels through the various Stations of the Cross behind and below the chapel, they can mediate upon the various stages of Christ's Passion as an additional act of Penance or purification ritual before entering the Sanctuary. At the rise of the hill, as the pilgrim leaves the final Station of the Cross and gains access to the chapel, the pilgrim confronts a final shrine dedicated to La Conquistadora*,* a Conquering Virgin of New Mexico (Fig. 3.3). Seekers often carry small crosses with them during their pilgrimage and leave them on this shrine. This final sacred image grounds the pilgrim within religious traditions and symbols specific to New Mexico. As described previously, this intensification of symbols can serve to transport the seeker into a deeper state of reception of grace received when entering the sanctuary. In the side chapel of the sanctuary, pilgrims find the *tierra bendita*, or blessed earth that pilgrims often take home with them after rubbing it on their bodies. Like the water at Lourdes, believers credit the earth at Chimayó with many miracles.

Prototypical Pilgrimage

Just as Van Gennep perceived a repeating pattern in life cycle rituals worldwide, British anthropologist Victor Turner has analyzed the phenomenon of

pilgrimage and articulated four forms of its practice: 1) prototypical, 2) archaic, 3) Medieval and 4) modern. The first kind of pilgrimage, prototypical, celebrates the spiritual founder of a religious practice and the locality associated with its formation. The pilgrim undertakes a journey to the site as a means of reenacting major events in the founder's life, recalling the religion's fundamental teachings, and experiencing the spiritual power contained by the site's physical location. Indigenous North Americans, specifically the various groups of Lakota, make pilgrimages to the *Paha Sapa* or the Black Hills of South Dakota, and visit various sacred sites often conducting vision quests.[290] A pilgrimage to Mecca, or *hajj* conducted by a Muslim, one to Jerusalem undertaken by a practicing Christian, or a Buddhist sitting under the *bodhi* tree in meditation on the same ground where Buddha realized an end to suffering has the power to transform the consciousness of individual. Standing in the location where the founder of an individual's religion came to consciousness allows the pilgrim, in a sense, to briefly "become" the founder. Both Christian and Buddhist traditions speak

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[290] The original name of the Lakota peoples for the Black Hills was *Paha Sapa*, *Paha* meaning height and *Sapa* meaning black. This area is sacred for the Lakota people, the Northern Cheyenne, and Omaha peoples because it contains the Lakota's place of origins and Bear Butte, an important vision quest and pilgrimage site. The Black Hills covers hundreds of miles in four states including South Dakota, Nebraska, Wyoming, and Montana. Because European colonizers found indigenous North American names difficult to understand and pronounce many of the names these peoples gave themselves have been altered. The Annishinabe (Ojibway/Chippewa) gave the Lakota/Dakota/Nakota their generally used name of "Sioux," Annishinabe for "enemy" or "snake" because of the enmity between these groups. The various "Sioux" peoples include the Teton (Lakota) that consist of seven groups: the Oglala, Minneconjou, Two Kettle, Brule, No Bows, Hunkpapa, and Black Foot. The Yankton (Nakota) band consists of the Yankton and the Yanktonais. The Santee (Dakota) bands include the Medwakanton, Wahpekute, Wahpeton, and Sisseton.

of this phenomena by "putting on the mask of Christ"[291] or "putting on the head of Buddha," parallel spiritual practices that invite the practitioner to act and think in the manner of their spiritual leader.

Archaic Pilgrimage

The second kind of pilgrimage, archaic, combines existing religious practices and beliefs, often those of indigenous peoples, with those of subsequent groups. Previous beliefs mix with later ones to create new syncretized forms. Numerous examples of this form of pilgrimage exist in Latin America, including journeys to the Basilica of the Virgin of Guadalupe in Tepeyac and those to Chalma, near Mexico City. Chalma is a pre-Contact site where people offered the blood of humans and animals to deities. After the Spanish conquered the area, a miracle occurred when a statue of a crucified Christ appeared in a nearby cave. Today's pilgrimages to Chalma reflect the merging of Christian and existing indigenous practices. These practices include carrying ritual items into the sanctuary to receive blessings from the priest, bathing in sacred springs understood to possess healing properties, and dancing for the Lord of Chalma as a means of receiving an answer to prayer.

Medieval Pilgrimage

Medieval pilgrimage comprises a third form of pilgrimage and describes those

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[291] Turner and Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage*, 11.

practices first undertaken during the Medieval Period in Europe that continue today. The pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela in northern Spain exemplifies a contemporary pilgrimage practice that dates to the medieval period. According to legend, Christ chose St. James to preach the Gospel in Spain's Iberian Peninsula. After converting only a few Galicians to Christianity, he returned to Jerusalem where he was beheaded. James' Spanish followers found his body in a boat washed ashore on the Galician coast and they buried him nearby. Seven centuries later, James' tomb was discovered, his body still recognizable. The church built in his honor quickly became a pilgrimage site.[292]

Modern Pilgrimage

The fourth and final type of pilgrimage references those conducted in the modern period. These pilgrimages may access sites that constitute the three previous groups, for example, Jerusalem, Mecca, and Bodh Gaya (prototypical), Tepeyac and Chalma (archaic), or Compostela (Medieval). Pilgrimages of this kind constitute practices and beliefs that appear out of sync in the face of modern forces of globalization and our world's ever-increasing technological advances. The Huichol pilgrimage to Wirikuta is an example of a modern pilgrimage of the Americas that shares elements with archaic and prototypical pilgrimages. It provides an

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[292] Linda Kay Davidson and David M. Gitlitz, *Pilgrimage from the Ganges to Graceland: An Encyclopedia*, 2 vols., vol. 2 (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2002), 573-576.

extraordinary example of the power of place within sacred journeys while demonstrating attendant social and cultural factors.

To Find Our Lives: The Huichol Pilgrimage to Wirikuta

The Huichol, peoples indigenous to the central Mexican states of Jalisco and Nayarit, conduct a yearly pilgrimage to *Wirikúta*, meaning "To Find Our Lives." For centuries, the Huichol have traveled on foot from their current villages in western central Mexico eastward to Wirikúta, a distance of three hundred miles. They conduct the pilgrimage for the dual purpose of gathering the annual peyote harvest and to reenact their Creation Story. Increasingly, pilgrims travel the long distance through the desert by van or bus. Usually conducted by small groups, often members of an extended family, the group bears the responsibility of returning to the community with enough peyote to accommodate ceremonial practices during the following year.

Wirikúta, like Aztlán, is understood as the Huichol's ancestral homeland, a Paradise, and the site of creation where they became the First People. Rituals conducted at the site include the peyote hunt where pilgrims must "kill" the peyote and offer its flesh and blood back to the earth before consuming it. Everyone in the pilgrimage group consumes peyote including children. While the members of the group communally undergo hallucinogenic visions, no one speaks of their individual visionary experience. Each person's encounter with the ancestors remains known by them alone. The ceremonies performed in the desert allow the Huichol to reenact and

relive the moment of their creation, to actually become the First People, to merge with each other, nature, and their deities. Lastly, this ritual affirms the Huichol's way of life and indigenous identity in the midst of dominant culture.

Codex Delilah as Pilgrimage

In a similar manner to the Huichol pilgrimage to Wirikuta, the pilgrimage portrayed in Codex Delilah contains elements of archaic, prototypical, and modern pilgrimage. At first glance, Six-Deer's journey seems to contain more elements in common with rites of passage rather than pilgrimage because it does not appear to fulfill the central aspect of pilgrimage, that of voluntary election. However, although Ix-Chel directs the child to begin the quest, Six-Deer participates of her own free will.

Panel 3: Divine Intervention

Six-Deer enters the third panel, dated 1531, ten years after the conquest of Mexico by Spain. Weakened from the journey and hoping to bandage her now bleeding feet, she stops to rest at the top of a hill. Suddenly, a bolt of lightning strikes the ground in front of her. Momentarily blinded, she struggles to recover. When her sight returns, she sees a glowing woman in front of her. Montoya names this person Lupe-Lupita, or "little Lupe," a reference that generally indicates a personal, intimate, and affectionate relationship with the Virgin of Guadalupe. In this panel, Montoya encapsulates the three hundred years of the colonial period, a period that ended when Mexico earned its independence from Spain in 1820. The artist addressed the issue of

indigenous identity and its transformation during the Spanish administration. Six-Deer tells Lupe that she thought the Conquistadors destroyed the old ways. Lupe responds saying, "Try to understand that the old is not dead but disguised under the new. Our old religion and gods are the same, but everything is now called Christian." When Six-Deer wonders why the old ways must be disguised, Lupe informs her, "It's a matter of survival."

Montoya references the syncretization process, the combining of indigenous traditions and Catholic practices, that begins during this period. When Lupe-Lupita declares that the old ways continue *underneath* the new, she means this literally as well as figuratively. The Spanish conquistadors built their capital, now Mexico City, upon the ruins of Tenochtítlan, the Mexica's capital. Similarly, the Basilica of Guadalupe, the site of one of the most well-known and populous pilgrimage of the Americas [293] now stands on the top of Tepeyac Hill. Before the conquest, this hill housed a shrine where indigenous observances and rituals honored the Mexica earth goddess Tonantzin.

Montoya based the story she re-imagines in the codex's third panel on the appearance of the Virgin of Guadalupe to Juan Diego in 1531. In an attempt to convert Indians to Christianity, Catholic missionaries, from religious orders including the

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[293] Thirty years ago, Victor Turner reported that approximately fifteen thousand pilgrims visit the image of the Virgin of Guadalupe at Tepeyac daily. Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors*, 189.

Jesuits, Dominicans, Franciscans, and Augustinians, often incorporated or adapted existing indigenous sites and practices with Christian rituals and meanings. During mass conversions and baptisms, clergy gave many *conversos* or Indians converts the same Christian baptismal name or pairs of names,[294]a practice that erased their existing indigenous names. The Indian we know today as Juan Diego, the recently beatified St. Juan Diego, the man to whom the Virgin of Guadalupe appeared on Tepeyac Hill, was originally called *Cuahtlatohauc* or "He who speaks like an Eagle," generally shortened to Singing Eagle. Juan Diego then is John James Eagle, with the eagle also being the symbol for John the Evangelist. The name alone demonstrates intertwining of indigenous and Christian traditions. Every year on December 12, the dark Virgin's feast day, people from all over the world follow in John James Eagle's footsteps and make pilgrimages up Tepeyac hill to the Basilica of Guadalupe.

Lupe-Lupita, as willing helper to Six-Deer, not only heals her feet but also provides her with important advice on how to navigate the rest of her pilgrimage. Admonishing the child not to forget her Indian roots, Lupe disappears in another bolt of lightning. Not every pilgrim is lucky enough to experience a divine intervention along the pilgrimage route, but this example bears out Turner's claim that as pilgrims travel closer to the pilgrimage site, they encounter sacred symbols in greater power

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[294] Turner and Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage*, 82.

and frequency.

Panel 6: Spiritual and Political Pilgrimage

In the sixth panel of *Codex Delilah*, Montoya pictures the green chile fields of southern New Mexico. Six-Deer comes across a young woman, La-Velia, a Chicana activist involved in organizing on behalf of farmworkers. Montoya locates this panel's events in 1969 at the height of *El Movimiento Chicano*, the Chicano Movement, the struggle for the civil rights of Mexican Americans that began in the early 1960s. The United Farmworkers Union, founded by César and Helen Chávez and Dolores Huerta, formed a central arm of the fight for social justice. When Six-Deer joins La-Velia on a pilgrimage to Santa Fe to support striking farmworkers, her spiritual pilgrimage becomes a political pilgrimage as well.

In an important document from this time, the Plan de Delano, César Chávez called for the liberation of the farm worker. Chávez initiated the Delano Grape Strike on September 16, 1965, evoking the words pilgrimage, penance, and revolution. He led a group of thousands of marchers on a pilgrimage from Delano, California, to the state capital at Sacramento and inaugurated the strike to protest working conditions of farmworkers. Chávez termed the march a "pilgrimage" and its path traveled through agricultural areas of California where, in Chávez's words, "the Mexican race has

sacrificed itself for the last hundred years… to make other men rich."[295] The pilgrimage was to acknowledge the suffering endured by past generations of farmworkers. Chávez hoped that the pilgrimage would be "the match that will light our cause for all farm workers." Several years later, the strike ended with a signed contract between growers and the Farmworkers Union.

Panel 6 of *Codex Delilah* parallels the many pilgrimages made by Chávez and farmworkers throughout the United States of North America. Pilgrimages of protest and penance took place in California from the fruit orchards of the Santa Clara Valley near San José, California, to the state capital of Sacramento. In New Mexico, agricultural workers and their supporters marched from Hatch, the center of New Mexico's chile fields, to Santa Fe. Additionally, similar demonstrations took place in the center of the nation's spinach production, Crystal City, Texas, where workers walked to Austin to ensure better working conditions.

This chapter addressed Six-Deer's transformation from child to adult and from hopeful initiate to accomplished healer. It established commonalities between her journey and rites of passage, rituals of initiation, and pilgrimage. The issues of the

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[295] César Chávez, "Plan de Delano/The Delano Manifesto," in *Chicano Art History: A Book of Selected Readings*, ed. Jacinto Quirarte (San Antonio: Research Center for the Arts and Humanities, University of Texas at San Antonio, 1984), 10.

sacred introduced in this chapter are more deeply discussed in the following section of the dissertation.

Chapter 4

Codex Delilah as Embodiment of the Sacred

Introduction

As early as 1988, Amalia Mesa-Bains articulated the need for a more precise and insightful inquiry of Chicana/o and Latina/o art. In the quest for its origins and significance, Mesa-Bains identified spirituality as a "primary impulse" in this art production.[296] Throughout her critical work and art making, she has established the connection between expressions of spirituality and the issues of memory, cultural "re-collection" and preservation, ceremony, popular arts, and healing. In this section of the work, I follow many of the paths charted by Mesa-Bains and this study owes much to her pioneering insight and ongoing analysis.

The concern with spirituality in Chicana/o art manifests itself in sculpture, performance, and installation as well as painting, printmaking, photography, and textiles. While using a wide variety of media to express these concerns, Chicana/o artists often rely on three-dimensional forms associated with religious and spiritual expressions and practices to investigate the sacred. These forms include shrines,

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[296] Amalia Mesa-Bains, "Curatorial Statement," in *Ceremony of Memory: New Expressions in Spirituality Among Contemporary Hispanic Artists* (Santa Fe: Center for Contemporary Arts of Santa Fe, 1988), 7.

altares (altars), nichos (niches), reliquaries, *retablos* (altar-pieces), and *reredoses* (altar-screens).[297] As previously discussed, the codex shares in this inheritance as spiritual referent and sacred form.

This chapter continues the analysis of other meaning(s) present in *Codex Delilah* and examines how Montoya's representations of the sacred, spirituality, and various healing practices intersect with notions of the body. I frame my investigation within the artist's representations of the body because, as Mesa-Bains has pointed out, "…the representation of the human body through figuration in any culture provides a lens for examining attitudes, beliefs and practices surrounding the soul, the sacred, the somatic, the erotic and the psychic."[298] At the outset, I expand the understanding of

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[297] I follow the convention established in the initial pages of the dissertation and only italicize words in languages other than English at first mention. Nichos (niches) refer to architectural features recessed in church walls where statues of saints are placed. A reliquary is a container that holds the remains of a saint or holy person, either bodily remains such a bones, hair, or objects associated with the deceased person such as clothing. The container can range in size from a few inches to several feet. Many Catholic churches in Mexico and the United States display coffin-like boxes made of wood and glass that allow the worshipper to contemplate a representation of the body of Christ or figures of saints. These large-scale tombs may also hold holy relics of the depicted figures. Retablos are generally small, flat pieces of wood painted with sacred images that can be moved, hung on walls, or placed on altars or in niches inside the home. In contrast, reredoses or altar screens are carved from wood and placed on church or home altars as a backdrop. They are generally much larger in scale than retablos and often containing niches for *santos* (figures of saints carved from wood). The literature on historical precedents and contemporary examples of these art forms is vast so I refer the reader to only a few examples, Kay Giffords, *Mexican Folk Retablos: Masterpieces on Tin* (Tucson: University of Arizona, 1974), Thomas J. Steele, *Santos and Saints: Essays and Handbook* (Albuquerque: Calvin Horn Publisher, Inc., 1974), Dexter Cirillo, "Santero Art," in *Across Frontiers: Hispanic Crafts of New Mexico* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1998), Mary Montaño, "Chapter 2, Artes del Espiritú, Religious Arts," in *Tradiciones Nuevomexicanas: Hispano Arts and Culture of New Mexico* (Albuquerque: College of Fine Arts, University of New Mexico Press, 2001).

[298] Mesa-Bains, "Chicano Bodily Aesthetics," 6.

what constitutes "body" in this endeavor and suggest that *Codex Delilah* as art object forms a "body." As such, the codex contains characters (human figures) and images that encapsulate the sacred by enacting rituals, making spiritual references, and possessing sacred meaning. Like Helen Cordero's Storyteller Figure,[299] the codex as art object constitutes a body that supports other "bodies" including bodies of knowledge, mythic bodies, bodies of land and water, animal and human bodies, and bodies of text in three languages (Fig 4.1). In the work, Montoya uses these various bodies to specify time, evoke place, reveal invisible forces, and visually and textually narrate the progression of Six-Deer's journey. In some way, each of these bodies references or enlarges Montoya's construction of the sacred. Therefore, I investigate and position the work as an embodiment of the sacred.

Heavenly and Earthly Bodies in *Codex Delilah*

In the first register of each panel, Montoya reveals invisible forces by

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[299] Noted ceramic artist Helen Cordero from New Mexico's Cochiti Pueblo began to work in clay at age 49. She first developed the Storyteller Figure in 1964 to commemorate her grandfather, Santiago Quintana, a highly regarded storyteller and clown society member. Originally fashioned with five children, over the years Cordero added up to thirty listening figures to the central storyteller character. Cordero transformed an existing ceramic tradition of the "Singing Mother," a seated female figure with an open (singing) mouth who holds a child in her arms, by changing the gender of the figure and by adding additional figures of children. For more information on the Storyteller Figure and Pueblo ceramic traditions, see Barbara A. Babcock, Guy Monthan, and Doris Monthan, *The Pueblo Storyteller: Development of a Figurative Ceramic Tradition* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1986), 270-276. For an exploration of the issues of identity, ethnicity and cultural preservation within this ceramic tradition, see Laura John, "Reexamining Pueblo Ceramic Changes as Expressions of Identity," *Brandeis Graduate Journal* 1:1 (2003).

illustrating a visual dialog among four mythic bodies known as Bacabs.[300] Found in both Maya and Mexican cosmologies, Bacabs or Skybearers hold up the four corners of the world. Each bearer inhabits a specific cardinal direction and color indicates the Bacabs's position in the cosmos, for example, north (white), south (yellow), east (red), west (black). Montoya reproduces exact figures from the Maya *Dresden Codex* where these spiritual entities appear as human bodies with exaggerated or stylized features. Montoya used these figures to visually convey the disharmony and conflict evident in the New World because of European contact. Often malevolent,[301] the Bacabs's interactions become increasingly more violent from initial panel to final panel, thus mirroring the escalating power imbalance that Six-Deer seeks to correct.

In the second and largest register of the codex, Montoya visually narrates the story by presenting the human bodies of Six-Deer and the female iconic figures the girl meets during her journey. Besides using human figures to illustrate the story, in this register the artist places small bodies of Spanish text that summarize the major action of each panel.[302] In Panel 3, the character Lupe-Lupita reassures Six-Deer that,

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[300] For an understanding of the role of the Bacabs within Maya cosmology and their relationship to the four chacs (rain gods), see Roberta H. Markman and Peter T. Markman, *The Flayed God: The Mesoamerican Mythological Tradition: Sacred Texts and Images from Pre-Columbian Mexico and Central America* (San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers, 1992), 91-93, Sharer, *The Ancient Maya*, 520-538, Coe, *The Maya*, 203-206.

[301] Mary Miller and Karl Taube, "Skybearers," in *An Illustrated Dictionary of the Gods and Symbols of Ancient Mexico and the Maya* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1993), 154-155.

[302] Montoya's model for this use of text may be post-Contact codices where glosses in Spanish are

despite the destruction of human lives and dramatic changes brought about by the invasion of Mesoamerica, the ancient ways endure underneath newly imposed Christian ones. García-Camarillo and Montoya have Lupe-Lupita enjoin Six-Deer to "…not be confused by appearances that disguise a deeper reality."[303] Montoya emphasizes this idea by placing the body of Spanish text "Las Tradiciones Viven (The Traditions Live)" in the upper right section of this panel.

Additionally, in this register the artist specifies time by marking the codex with Maya glyphs. Generally found in the far left or far right sections of each panel, the glyphs provide a temporal context for the visual and textual story. In Maya cosmology, time is an integral aspect of spiritual worldview, each day possesses power and significance, and cycles of time were closely marked and celebrated. Ironically, Montoya uses the Mesoamerican cyclical concept of time to mark the story that ostensibly follows a Western linear structure. These juxtapositions reinforce Montoya's point of pre-contact traditions existing underneath and parallel to imposed European ones, an idea codified by Guillermo Bonfil Batalla.[304]

In the third register of each panel, Montoya evokes place by orienting the viewer simultaneously in symbolic, spiritual, and geographic space through color

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placed next to Náhuatl words. For examples of these glosses, see Berdan and Anawalt, *The Essential Codex Mendoza*.

[303] I have taken this quote from Register 4, Panel 3, of *Codex Delilah*.

[304] Guillermo Bonfil Batalla, *México profundo*, 1st ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press: Institute of Latin American Studies, 1996).

photographs of bodies of land, water, or animals. Six-Deer begins her quest for spiritual knowledge and power in the Maya Lowlands of Palenque in 1401 and attains her abilities as healer on the Sandía Mountains of Albuquerque, New Mexico, in 2012. When considering the potential connections between each individual geographic site Montoya presents and a possible pattern among the sites as a whole, the geographic feature of "mountain" and its ritual companion, the "mountaintop ceremonial center," frequently appear. Six-Deer travels through several places located within mountainous regions or on the slope of mountainous areas including Palenque, Quiahuítzlan, Tepeyac, and the areas in and around Albuquerque, New Mexico. Mesoamerica cosmology often conflated mountains with temple structures and both contained spiritual power. Mountains housed spiritual entities, deities, and deified ancestors. Every time Montoya presents a mountain or mountaintop area, she layers additional symbolic meaning by connecting these areas to varying manifestations of the earth goddess, ancestors, and spiritual power.

David Freidel, Linda Schele, and Joy Parker describe Palenque as being built "…on a flat shelf halfway up one of the slopes of a majestic ridge of mountains."[305] The Cross Group, one of the temple complexes at this site, contains accounts of the Maya creation recorded by Lord Pakal's son, *Chan-Balam*. Additionally, the temple

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[305] David Freidel, Linda Schele, and Joy Parker, *Maya Cosmos: Three Thousand Years on the Shaman's Path* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1993), 144.

group's architectural placement within the site reenacts the creation story and simultaneously situates creation within a mountainous topography. According to this story, the Primordial Mother and Father fashioned the first humans from maize found in a pool of water contained in a cleft at First-True-Mountain.[306] Within this sacred landscape, the artist places Ix-Chel, a goddess from Maya cosmology associated with weaving and childbirth. Her multiple roles included the goddess of erotic love and marriage, protector of children and pregnant mothers, and goddess of healing. Although known primarily as moon goddess, Markman and Markman state that she was also "…considered to be the wife, or sometimes the sister of the sun as well as earth goddess and mother of the corn god."[307] In her aspect as moon goddess, she possessed the generative power of procreation. This concern with creation and generation also figures in Montoya's later depiction of the spiritual powers associated with Tepeyac and its goddess in Panel 3.

The artist does not specifically mention *Tepeyacac* (later Tepeyac) but indicates this reference through a description of the location as, " …high terrain that leads to Tenochtitlán" and by mentioning that the woman appears to Six-Deer in "…a flash of blinding light." At the time of the European contact, Tepeyacac contained a shrine that housed a representation of Tonantzin, or "Our Mother," the Mexica/Aztec

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[306] Ibid., 138-139.
[307] Markman and Markman, *The Flayed God*, 190.

earth goddess. The Spanish destroyed this image of Tonantzin and erected a cross on the hill where her temple had been. In addition to her powers as earth goddess, Tonantzin was also associated with Coatlique*, Centeotl*, and Cihuacóatl*,* and later appeared as the colonial *La Virgen de Guadalupe.* Montoya situates Guadalupe's healing ability with the site of Tepeyac*,* embedding spiritual power into the landscape or perhaps simply channeling power resident in the earth through this transformed virgin. The artist privileges the generative powers of these locations by associating them with Ix-Chel and Tonantzin/Guadalupe thereby stressing the themes of healing and creation. Further, she connects the act of creation with the earth or landscape and links these sacred figures across geographic regions.

In the fourth and final register, Montoya textually narrates her epic by placing computer-generated bodies of English text composed with Cecilio García-Camarillo that provide a sequential account of Six-Deer's adventures. The textual narrative identifies each character by name, designates Six-Deer's geographic location, and explains various cultural and historical references made by the work. Here Montoya and García-Camarillo provide nuances not discernible from the visuals alone. Spiritual specialists performed rituals recorded in ancient codices and used the images (and texts) during oral performances as cues or prompts for improvisational retelling and reenactment of daily and other cyclical rites.

While all these bodies are provocative, worthy of consideration, and often

embody the sacred as indicated, in this section of the work I concentrate my analysis on the human bodies represented in the second register of selected panels of the artwork. However, I comment on the non-human bodies when pertinent to the discussion. Seeking to discover how Montoya uses the human figure as a site for meaning and as central element in her production of the sacred, this chapter proposes to demonstrate the body as integrally connected to community, as site of sacrifice and redemption,[308] and as site of collective memory, understood as an archive of spiritual knowledge and wisdom.

Curanderismo as Worldview, Holistic System, and Living Healing Practice

To articulate the construction of the sacred in the codex, I would now like to imbricate the idea of codex as body with the contemporary healing practice of curanderismo. What is curanderismo and why do I use it to inform this section of the dissertation? More importantly, how does curanderismo relate to notions of the body and the sacred?[309] Curanderismo is a Mexican and Chicana/o philosophical system and healing modality that views the human body (soma), the mind (psyche), soul, and

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[308] While the word redemption will be familiar to Christian readers, here I use the word in its larger sense as the saving or preserving of something that has deteriorated or is nearly lost. Christian theology understands redemption as the deliverance from sin through Christ's death on the cross. Christ's act of sacrifice secures eternal life for believers.

[309] Mesa-Bains states that understanding the spiritual and ceremonial aspects of Chicana/o art necessitates recognizing the influence of curanderismo and the worldview it reflects. See Mesa-Bains, "Imáges e Historias," 7.

spirit as an integrated unit.[310] According to this system, each aspect of the human organism must be in harmony to ensure good health. If any aspect is disrupted, illness may result. Practioners, known as *curanderas* and *curanderos*, diagnose and treat illness through a process that evaluates every part of the person's life including their family and community relationships. These healers seek to restore the balance between the patient's emotional, spiritual, mental, and physical selves as well as between the patient and their familial and social networks. In *Codex Delilah,* Six-Deer epitomizes these concerns and undertakes her arduous journey to restore a harmonious equilibrium to her world.

Therefore, I use curanderismo to invoke a worldview that understands the various aspects of the individual first, as one inseparable entity, and secondly, as integrally connected to the community. I maintain that this worldview, repeatedly implicated by Montoya, allows us to simultaneously consider the bodies in the codex as separate and composite elements of a larger whole. This worldview has its *raices* (roots) in the concepts of reciprocity and sacrifice, important aspects of Mesoamerican cosmology still in practice at the time of first European contact. Understanding this *weltanschauung* (worldview), its basis in Mesoamerica, and its contemporary reverberations requires a brief overview of these notions from Central Mexican

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[310] The classic Western separation of mind and body as codified by Aristotle and later expanded by Descartes does not exist in this system. See Aristotle, *De anima* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961).

cosmology and of curanderismo, its history and development, basic tenets, and common practices.

Sacrifice and Reciprocity as Mesoamerican Model and Worldview

According to various Mexica/Aztec or Central Mexican creation stories, the Ancestral Couple (also known as Ometeótl and Omecihúatl) gave birth to four sons, Red *Tetzcatlipóca*, Black Tetzcatlipóca or Smoking Mirror, *Quetzalcóatl*, and Huitzilopóchtli. In four successive cycles of creation and destruction, known as suns, these gods first fashion and then annihilate imperfect versions of human beings. Finally, at *Tamoanchan*[311] they combine drops of their blood with the ground bones of the previous humans to produce the fifth and current version of the human race.

Heavens, earth, and humans now exist, but the world remains without light. The gods meet at Teotihuacán, and two among them, *Nanahúatzin* and *Tecuciztécatl* cast themselves into a sacrificial fire to remedy the situation. Reborn respectively as the sun and the moon, these celestial beings initially cannot stir and thus inaugurate the cyclical movement of the world. The gods then agree to an additional sacrifice and Quetzalcoatl cuts out the hearts of the remaining deities with a knife. Thus, with this act, motion (*ollin*) comes into the world and *El Quinto Sol* (the Fifth Sun) begins. With their deaths, the gods create both our present world and a sacrificial model that

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[311] Alfredo López Austin, *Tamoanchan, Tlalocan: Places of Mist*, trans. Bernard R. Ortíz de Montellano and Thelma Ortíz de Montellano (Niwot: University of Colorado Press, 1997).

informed Central Mexican life and religious practice. These deities gave their blood and their lives to generate the human race and ensure its survival. In return, people presented their blood and that of others to the gods. This reciprocal relationship guaranteed the daily rising of the sun that would not dawn without the offer of this sacred substance. This view illustrates that bringing forth anything new requires sacrifice, an idea I will expand upon later in this study.

Curanderismo: History and Development

In the sixteenth century, existing healing practices of the indigenous peoples of Central Mexico combined with treatments and knowledge brought to the Americas by Spanish missionaries. This fusion of Mesoamerican and European spiritual beliefs and health practices serves as an antecedent for today's practice of curanderismo. According to Robert Trotter and Juan Antonio Chavira, the beliefs and practices that shape the contemporary practice of curanderismo come from several sources including Greek humoral medicine, European witchcraft, early Arabic medicine and health practices incorporated by Spain, contemporary Native American spirituality, and practices and beliefs grounded in Judeo-Christian traditions.[312] Trotter and Chavira minimize the Mesoamerican foundations of curanderismo and maintain that its

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[312] Robert T. Trotter and Juan Antonio Chavira, *Curanderismo: Mexican American Folk Healing*, 2nd ed. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997), 25-26.

historical origins and current practices derive primarily from European influences.[313]

The nature and degree of influence from European humoral medicine and existing pre-contact Mesoamerican customs on this healing modality is one of the more hotly contested aspects in the scholarship surrounding curanderismo and indigenous healing systems. Because Montoya refers to the notions of balance and equilibrium, concepts whose origin and presence within curanderismo are constitutive elements of current discourse, I include a brief summary of the key concerns of this conversation.

Humoral Medicine and the "Hot" Debate on its Presence in Curanderismo

During the Renaissance, a renewed interest in the earlier civilizations of Greece and Rome prompted the educated classes to read the classic treatises of Galen and Hippocrates on the healing arts. Hippocrates devised a system termed humoral medicine. Humoral medicine proposed that the body consisted of four humors: blood, phlegm, black bile, and yellow bile. Each humor was associated with a personality such as melancholic or phlegmatic, a yearly season such as spring or autumn, and an element such as earth or air. Additionally, each humor possessed a combination of particular qualities; cold, hot, wet, or dry. According to humoral doctrine, the four humors not only controlled one's life and health but determined a person's mood and

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[313] Ibid., 38.

temperament as well. Optimum health, then, resulted from a balance of these humors. Remedies attempted to adjust the patient's existing humoral disequilibrium by applying a material that possessed the opposite quality of the illness. For example, a hot and dry condition such as a fever was treated with cold and wet substances, either in the form of cooling foods or cold-water baths.

The scholarly debate regarding the influence of European humoral theory upon both post-contact and contemporary Mexican practices has raged over several decades.[314] George M. Foster maintains that European humoral medicine exacted considerable influence on Mesoamerican practices and suggests that most existing American knowledge(s) and practices collapsed during the colonial period. He believes that these practices were either subsumed under newly introduced European methods or eliminated altogether.[315] Acknowledging that the wet and dry aspects of

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[314] For one of the most recent additions to this ongoing argument, see Jacques M. Chevalier and Andrés Sánchez Bain, *The Hot and the Cold: Ills of Humans and Maize in Native Mexico* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003). For important previous scholarship, see George McClelland Foster, *A Cross-Cultural Anthropological Analysis of a Technical Aid Program* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1951), George McClelland Foster, "Relationships between Spanish and Spanish-American Folk Medicine," *Journal of American Folklore* 66:261 (1953): 201-247, Richard L. Currier, "The Hot-Cold Syndrome and Symbolic Balance in Mexican and Spanish-American Folk Medicine," *Ethnology* 5:3 (1966): 261-263, Alfredo López Austin, *Textos de medicina náhuatl*, 2nd ed. (Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1975), Diana Ryesky, *Conceptos tradicionales de la medicina en un pueblo mexicano: un análisis antropológico* (Mexico, D. F.: Secretaría de Educación Pública, Dirección General de Divulgación, 1976), Alfredo López Austin, *The Human Body and Ideology: Concepts of the Ancient Náhuas*, trans. Thelma Ortíz de Montellano, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1988), 270-282, George McClelland Foster, *Hippocrates' Latin American Legacy: Humoral Medicine in the New World* (Langhorne: Gordon and Breach, 1994).

[315] George McClelland Foster, "Hippocrates' Latin American Legacy: 'Hot' and 'Cold' in Contemporary

the Old World humoral model evaporated in the post-contact Americas, Foster claims that this loss was due to the complex nature of the theory. He argues that since the extensively documented requirements of the humoral theory were primarily transmitted through written form, and because native peoples of the Americas did not possess writing, only the more readily applicable hot-cold aspects of the theory prevailed. Consequently, Foster believes that pre-contact Mesoamerican knowledge has had minimal impact on surviving practices.

In contrast, Alfredo López Austin asserts that the hot-cold continuum existed in Mesoamerican before European contact and had a wider application than simply governing notions of health and illness. Basing his argument on post-contact texts and ethnographic research, López Austin demonstrates that the hot-cold polarity extended to the entire Mexica cosmos. Every aspect of the Central Mexican world, be it Heaven/Earth, Fire/Water, or Male/Female, was separated into dualistic, and therefore, balancing pairs. The natural world, cycles of time, and the Nahua language itself contained references to hot and cold. Animals and plants functioned within this system as causative elements, indicators, or cures of illness. For example, a particular animal containing cold properties might signify a specific illness, while a plant with hot

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Folk Medicine," in *Colloquia in Anthropology*, ed. R. K. Weatherington (Dallas: Southern Methodist University, Fort Burgwin Research Center, 1978), 3-19.

attributes would be used as its remedy.[316] Therefore, accepting López Austin's view, the contemporary practice of curanderismo has critically important Mesoamerican roots and demonstrates that the notions of balance and harmony between opposites that governed the Mexica world continues in today's practice of curanderismo.

Curanderismo: Practioners and Approaches

The term curanderismo comes from the Spanish word *curar* meaning to heal. Within this healing modality, there are three primary specializations: 1) *hierberas/os*, 2) *parteras,* and 3) *sobadoras/es. Hierberas/os*, also known as *yerberas/os,* or herbalists treat patients with remedies created from herbs and other plants, such as *yerba buena* (peppermint) and *manzanilla* (chamomile). The patient may drink an infusion, bathe the entire body or its affected parts, or apply poultices or ointments made from these substances. Parteras or midwives support a woman's health during pregnancy and assist the mother during labor and delivery. Sobadoras/es bring relief to their clients through touch and physical manipulation of the body's bones and muscles much like massage therapists and chiropractors. While this kind of curandera/o uses pressure and massage as the primary means of healing, they also supplement the treatment with herbal remedies when appropriate. Although most curanderas/os specialize in one treatment method, some combine approaches, and curanderas/os *total*

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[316] López Austin, *The Human Body and Ideology*, 270-276.

address clients' needs using all three modes.

Just as curanderas/os may choose one or more of these approaches when treating patients, they may also address the illness by using different levels of curanderismo. These levels consist of the material, the spiritual, and the mental. When a curandera/o works on the material level, they use everyday objects such as water, lemons, or eggs and symbolic objects such as crucifixes, votive candles, and holy cards (pictures of Catholic or folk saints) combined with prayer to improve the patient's condition.[317] Prayer generally accompanies herbal remedies, ceremonial cleansings known as *barridas*, or ritual incense burning used to purify the affected person or a specific location. When a curandera/o works on the spiritual level, they enter a meditative state often achieved through rhythmic movement or chanting. Once these healers, also known as *espiritistas/os,* achieve this trance state, they receive guidance and suggestions for treatment from the spiritual realm, a world beyond our everyday reality. Curanderas/os who operate on the mental level use psychic abilities developed during a *desarrollo* (a period of training or apprenticeship) to determine the nature of the patient's problem. They mentally direct healing energy, literally mental vibrations or (*vibraciones mentales*), toward the cause of the illness, often implanting

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[317] Eliseo Torres, *The Folk Healer: The Mexican-American Tradition of Curanderismo* (Kingsville: Nieves Press, 1983), 6-12 and 20-21.

new behaviors and new ways of thinking in the client's mind.[318]

Curanderismo: Transmission and the Cost of *El Don* (The Gift)

Because of the number of specializations and the multiple levels of approach within curanderismo, the training period of potential healers varies in length and content. Those working on the mental or spiritual level often undergo the most intensive education because achieving and manipulating states of altered or expanded perception has the potential to injure the apprentice or those in her/his care. Healing knowledge(s) and practices often pass by oral transmission through family members and relatives to the next generation. Sabinita Herrera, a curandera and yerbera from Truchas, New Mexico, received her instruction in herbal remedies from her father during childhood excursions in the northern desert hills of that state.[319] Others who become curanderas/os exhibit special skills during childhood such as Niño Fidencio or feel an attraction toward the practice and then undergo their desarrollo.[320] Many

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[318] For a more complete discussion of the levels of curanderismo, see Trotter and Chavira, *Curanderismo*, 73-161. Trotter and Chavira cite an interesting example of how a curandero, who worked on the mental level, introduced new behaviors and thought patterns to a client. An unfaithful husband was drinking alcoholically and about to lose his job. The curandero "dominated" this man's way of thinking and altered his thought processes to the point where the man decreased his drinking and "became a model husband and father."

[319] Bobette Perrone, H. Henrietta Stockel, and Victoria Krueger, *Medicine Women, Curanderas, and Women Doctors* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989), 99-105.

[320] José Fidencio Sintora Constantino was born in the Mexican state of Guanajuato in 1898 and demonstrated psychic powers and knowledge of healing plants as a child. Moving north to Espinazo, Nuevo León, Mexico, in 1925, he began a healing practice that attracted thousands. Believers today conduct twice-yearly pilgrimages to Espinazo to commemorate his birth and death. Here they seek healing or give thanks for cures effected in his name. Fidencio is said to have received his healing

curanderos/as acknowledge that they have received a calling for this profession termed *un don de Dios* (a gift from God). Olivia M. Espín, in her study of female healers in Latina/o communities throughout the United States, found that the majority of her subjects came to their healing practice after an illness or an experience of great suffering.[321] During the recovery process, the individual becomes aware of the calling or predisposition towards this healing tradition.

In a similar manner, the celebrated folk healer Don Pedrito Jaramillo discovered his life's vocation through an early spiritual experience. Born in Guadalajara, in the Mexican state of Jalisco, Jaramillo migrated to South Texas in the late 1880s where he cared for countless people during the next twenty-five years. While in Mexico, he injured himself during a horseback ride when a branch struck and deeply lacerated the bridge of his nose.[322] When nothing alleviated the pain, he sought surcease in a nearby wood containing a small pond. Lying near the water, Jaramillo applied mud to his nose for three consecutive days while maintaining a contemplative state. Although he retained a noticeable scar across his nose for the remainder of his

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powers at a sacred tree (*el pirulito)* that still stands in Espinazo and pilgrims often gather at its base. Fidencio's legacy lives on in *fidencistas*, those believers that channel or serve as mediums for his spirit. See Dore Gardner and Kay F. Turner, *Niño Fidencio: A Heart Thrown Open* (Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 1992).

[321] Olivia M. Espín, *Latina Healers: Lives of Power and Tradition* (Encino: Floricanto Press, 1996), 107-108.

[322] *The Faith Healer of Los Olmos: Biography of Don Pedrito Jaramillo*, 1st ed. (Falfurias: Brooks County Historical Survey Committee, 1972), 2-3.

life, the respite, combined with the cooling mud treatment, healed his condition. Returning home, Don Pedro fell into his first restful and pain-free sleep in days. However, he awoke shortly afterward hearing a voice inform him that God had chosen him to become a healer and to anticipate his first patient's arrival. The patient promptly materialized and Don Pedro provided a restorative remedy. This event served as his initiation into the spiritual calling of curandero, a role he would embrace for the rest of his life. Portrayed in all accounts as generous beyond measure, Don Pedro never asked for payment for his services. Rather, he viewed his healing power as God-given ability that must be used to serve those in need.[323]

Correspondingly, Peter T. Furst documents what he terms "sickness vocation" as a widespread occurrence within contemporary Huichol communities of the western state of Jalisco, Mexico. This vocation arises when an affected person experiences a life-threatening illness that requires a shaman's ministrations. The illness's cure in turn obligates a commitment to shamanic practice.[324] In indigenous and urban communities alike, the acceptance and development of these gifts implies lifelong responsibility and can incur disdain or suspicion from some community members. In Luis D. León's study of a curanderismo practice in East Los Angeles, his subject

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[323] Ruth Dodson, *Don Pedrito Jaramillo, "Curandero"* (Corpus Christi: Henrietta Newbury, 1994), 7-8.
[324] Peter T. Furst, *Visions of a Huichol Shaman* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 2003), 14-15.

Hortencia states that she would not wish el don upon anyone because of the potential for ostracism and misunderstanding.[325] Thus, the gift comes at a price. The healing path taken by today's curanderas/os necessitates risking public opinion while implying sacrifice embraced on behalf of the community.[326] The dissertation uses curanderismo as a model to help theorize the codex as interrelated site or container of the sacred and to explicate the spiritual "value" of the bodies of the various human characters in the work. Further, an understanding of the concepts and practices of curanderismo helps us consider the place of the person and the community within the world and their crucial relationship to each other as demonstrated in *Codex Delilah*.

This living healing system allows us to 1) regard the psychic, somatic, and spiritual aspects of a human being as a complete whole, 2) correspondingly view the individual and community as vitally connected, and 3) view the community's impact and connection to the world as a complete entity. Therefore, curanderismo provides a crucial model to consider the body, mind, soul, and spirit as an integrated unit. Before considering to what extent these notions factor in Montoya's codex, the study now investigates the body as archive of community history. Finally, I use this worldview

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[325] Luis D. León, "Soy una Curandera y Soy una Catolica: The Poetics of a Mexican Healing Tradition," in *Horizons of the Sacred: Mexican Traditions in U.S. Catholicism*, ed. Timothy Matovina and Gary Riebe-Estrella (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 111-112.

[326] For a literary example of a community's distrust of a curandera and her healing powers, see Rudolfo Anaya's landmark novel, *Bless Me, Ultima.* Rudolfo A. Anaya, *Bless Me, Ultima* (Berkeley: Quinto Sol Publications, 1972).

and healing practice to interrogate and analyze how the artist produces the sacred in the work.

The Body as Archive and Site of Collective Memory in *Codex Delilah*

In *Codex Delilah*, Montoya begins her narrative with a child's "dis-ease," an awareness of a disharmony in her indigenous world of 1492 that leaves her restless and confused. Soon to be initiated into the healing traditions of her people, the young girl, Six-Deer, approaches Ix-Chel,[327] the village elder and *tlamatani* (counselor) and asks her advice. Uneasy and afraid, the child fears the impending responsibility for her people's wellbeing and questions her ability to heal and to discern the truth. In response to the child's concerns, Ix-Chel charges Six-Deer to seek Aztlán. The elder promises the child that when she reaches Aztlán, Six-Deer will find Crow-Woman, a friend of Ix-Chel's who has the power to speak to the Gods. In communion with Crow-Woman and Omecihúatl, the female aspect of God, Six-Deer will discover the answers to her questions and understand "the nature of all things."

From the first panel of the codex, Montoya embeds the visual and textual narrative in a cross-cultural Mesoamerican cosmology that maps spiritual meaning on the bodies represented in the work. She combines Mesoamerican mythic figures,

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[327] When in languages other than English, I italicize only the initial reference to the person or deity that Montoya used to model her characters. For ease of use, I do not italicize the names of codex's characters after providing the historical origin or cosmological definition.

languages, and images from a variety of sites to construct a transformative epic that consists of multiple geographic locations, cultural symbols, and historic references. In this way, she provides a broad inclusiveness that refuses to honor or elevate one tradition or culture over another.

The artist produces this spiritual mestizaje by using Maya and Central Mexican references including Ometeótl/Omecihúatl, Ix-Chel, and Aztlán. First, the artist refers to deities that represent the Náhuatl principle of duality, the Central Mexican god(s) Ometeótl and Omecihúatl, in the text of its initial and final panels, framing the codex with a concern for the primordial balance between opposite forces.[328] Seen as one god containing both male and female aspects, Ometeótl, the male procreator, and Omecihúatl, the female procreator, represent the primordial human couple that brings humanity into existence. Mesoamerican cultures frequently link the Ancestral Couple to the sacred calendar and practices of healing and prophecy, aspects of spiritual expression that Montoya emphasizes throughout the codex.

Secondly, since Montoya places Ix-Chel, a powerful figure from the Maya pantheon, on the first panel, her presence announces the codex's concern with healing and spirituality from its inception. In ancient representations, Ix-Chel, a Maya moon goddess, appears as both a young and an old woman. However, in her aspect as elder

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[328] Náhuatl was one of the most prevalent indigenous languages of the Central Mexico area at the time of First Contact and today numbers several million speakers.

as Montoya imagines her in *Codex Delilah*, Maya cosmology associates this goddess with weaving, childbirth, and healing.

Thirdly, in a move that parallels El Movimiento's[329] embrace of indigenous identity as the source of cultural *orgullo* (pride) and power for Chicanas/os, Montoya situates Aztlán as the culmination of Six-Deer's pilgrimage.[330] By positioning this site as the source of spiritual knowledge and power for the child, the artist embeds spirituality into geographic space and implicates the earth as living body of wisdom and spiritual sustenance.

Montoya foregrounds the construction of individual characters with this evocation of place interlaced with spiritual power to demonstrate interconnections between the human body and the earth as sacred entities. She stages the Ix-Chel's body to illustrate a consciously attended balance of power between adult and child. Montoya illustrates Ix-Chel inhabiting the space equally with Six-Deer and physically positions the elder on Six-Deer's level. In every instance, we see Ix-Chel adjusting her adult size to the child to experience the world from Six-Deer's point of view. Ix-Chel's position indicates a sense of shared power, an awareness of holding and extending

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[329] El Movimiento was the movement for social justice for Chicanas/os that began in the 1960s.
[330] Aztlán is the origin or birthplace of the Mexica, one of the peoples living in Central Mexico at the time of first European contact.

power *between* adult and child, teacher and student, rather than power *over.*[331]

This awareness of the nuances of power identifies Ix-Chel as an ancient forebear of the healing specialization or spiritual practice of curanderismo. In her role as teacher and as spiritual visionary, Ix-Chel's body contains the traditional healing knowledges, customs, and practices of her village. She possesses the knowledge of restoring harmony and balance to the body of a patient, to the body of a people, and to the body of the earth. Present at births, deaths, and all the physical sufferings and spiritual afflictions in between, she also carries in her memory the histories of the community. She epitomizes body as repository and becomes the living archive of the collective memory of the history, culture, and somatic and psychic life of people as individuals and as a community. Therefore, she symbolizes the living embodiment of healing practices and *altepetl*[332] histories not only of her village but also of indigenous peoples throughout the Americas.

Within these references to spirituality and healing, Montoya braids symbols and rituals that implicate sacrifice as an intimate partner of Six-Deer's path. When Ix-

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[331] In *Latina Healers,* Espín refers to this stewardship of power by and among females, especially those involved in healing practices, as "*power to* rather than *power over*." (emphasis added) She argues that the increased self-esteem and sense of self-worth experienced by female healers creates a greater sense of control over their lives. This personal empowerment leads to an expanded sensitivity in the use of power rather than to its exploitation. See Espín, *Latina Healers: Lives of Power and Tradition*, 109-112.
[332] Altepetl annals are localized community histories from Central Mexico. See Elizabeth Hill Boone, "Aztec Altepetl Annals," in *Stories in Red and Black: Pictorial Histories of the Aztecs and Mixtecs* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), 187-237.

Chel charges the young girl with her quest for self-realization, she points Six-Deer northward[333] and places a turquoise necklace containing a flint (stone knife) around her neck. The village elder informs the child that all of their people's healers have worn this flint or *tecpatl*. With this ritual of blessing and protection, Ix-Chel initiates the construction of a spiritual genealogy within the codex, establishes the child as an integral part of its composition, and marks Six-Deer as a symbol of sacrifice, releasing her into a sacrificial path of initiation.

Symbolic Meanings and Practical Uses of Flint

What symbolic meaning does this knife possess? Why do I propose that Six-Deer's bearing of this stone connects her with the sacred and with notions of sacrifice? Since we could understand this implement interchangeably as either flint or obsidian, I include an explanation of both symbols.[334] Within the Mexica/Aztec world, flint performed practical functions and possessed multiple symbolic meanings. Flint, a dense igneous rock, is associated with fire and heat not only because of its ability to produce sparks, but also because of the molten volcanic lava that creates it. In addition to its critical function as fire-making tool, Central Mexicans used flint knives in rituals

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[333] The cardinal directions factor significantly in many indigenous traditions of the Americas. In Native North American cosmologies, the direction north is often associated with the color white, the element of air, and often understood as the place of the ancestors, hence the place of wisdom.

[334] In conversations with the artist, Montoya used the terms obsidian and flint interchangeably for the knife that Six-Deer carries. Delilah Montoya, interview with the author, Lockhart, Texas, digital audio and digital video recording, 26 November 2003.

of auto and human sacrifice. When evaluating its various symbolic and practical references, Debra Nagao suggests that flint's association with new beginnings and genesis is more significant than its role in sacrificial ritual.[335] She relates that in one version of the Mexica/Aztec creation story, the Ancestral Couple produce a child, Flint Knife, who either falls or is thrown from the sky upon *Chicomoztoc*, the Mexica/Aztec birthplace. This act produces sixteen hundred gods, thereby intertwining flint symbolically with the creation of sacred beings and with cultural origins. Accordingly, Ix-Chel provides Six-Deer with the flint to remind her of the source or root of her identity as a Mexicatl.

Additionally, 1 Flint designated the year the Mexica/Aztecs left Aztlán, an exodus that culminated in the founding of the new capital at Tenochtitlán. As the reader will recall from the previous chapter, Elizabeth Boone has suggested that this journey from Aztlán to Tenochtítlan transformed the disparate and unruly bands of the Mexica into a united nation capable of ruling Central Mexico. Therefore, flint is calendrically associated with the formation of new identities and new nations, specifically those of the Mexica/Aztecs. Six-Deer carries this instrument then to signal the development of a new identity, or as Anzaldúa describes it, identity as "…a

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[335] Debra Nagao, *Mexica Buried Offerings: A Historical and Contextual Analysis*, *BAR International Series 235* (Oxford: B.A.R., 1985), 62-64.

process-in-the-making."[336] Finally, positing a methodology based understandings of the indigenous body, Gabriel S. Estrada reminds us that *tecpatl* (flint knife) is the symbol for self-reflection, for ancient wisdom, for death and rebirth, and for the north, the direction that Six-Deer travels.[337]

Symbolic Meanings and Practical Uses of Obsidian

More fragile than flint, obsidian, or volcanic glass, forms when molten lava cools. It occurs in a number of colors including red, green, silver, gold, and black and various grades or qualities. Indigenous peoples prized the material because of its razor-sharp edge and its reflective surface. Prevalent throughout Mesoamerica, we recognize obsidian as weapon, as commodity, as deity, and as ritual implement. As weapon, obsidian provided the deadly power of the macuahuitl*,* a wooden club inset with rectangular blades of this stone, used to great effect by members of Mexico's Postclassic (800 ACE – 1500 ACE) warrior societies. Fuelled by the desire for captives rather than corpses,[338] Eagle and Jaguar Knights involved in the Wars of the Flowery Death,[339] or *xochiyaotl*, sought to subdue their enemies by slashing muscles

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[336] Keating, ed., *Interviews/Entrevistas*, 238.
[337] Gabriel S. Estrada, "The "Macho" Body as Social Malinche," in *Velvet Barrios: Popular Culture & Chicana/o Sexualities*, ed. Alicia Gaspar de Alba (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), 44-45.
[338] Inga Clendinnen, *Aztecs: An Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 116.
[339] Flower wars were prearranged conflicts between opposing groups with the sole intent of procuring captives for sacrificial rituals. Richard F. Townsend, *The Aztecs* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1992), 200. These rituals were patterned after the sacrifice of the *Mexica* gods *Nanahuatzin* and *Tecuciztecatl* who, as described previously, threw themselves into a fire in order to create a new age known as the

or joints with these clubs. As commodity, indigenous peoples traded obsidian through the Mesoamerican region from the early Olmec Period (1500 BCE) onward and it formed a central component of economic life. As deity signifier, obsidian refers to numerous gods in Mesoamerica. Most significantly, the stone identifies Smoking Mirror or Tetzcatlipóca, one of the four sons of Ometeótl/Omecihúatl. Associated with war and magic, he is also known as the patron of diviners. We recognize Tetzcatlipóca in various depictions because he holds or wears an obsidian mirror, the instrument of prophecy. The stone often comprises one of his feet as well since he lost this appendage in a struggle with the Earth Monster (caiman) during the creation of the world. In addition to scrying tool or divination device, Central Mexican priests used obsidian as a ritual implement to excise captives' hearts during sacrificial rituals.[340] The priests offered these hearts to the gods to ensure the continuity of the universe and, as we have seen, the daily rising of the sun.

The multiple associations that flint and obsidian possess compound the symbolic significance of Six-Deer's relationship with this implement. The connection

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Fifth Sun or *El Quinto Sol.* For an account of the creation of this new age, see Bernardino de Sahagún, *General History of the Things of New Spain, Book 7: The Sun, Moon, and Stars, and the Binding of the Years*, translated by Arthur J. O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble (Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research, and Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 1953): 3-9.

[340] A variety of sacrificial rites, including human sacrifice, existed among the Classic and Postclassic Maya as well. See Linda Schele, "Human Sacrifice among the Classic Maya," in *Ritual Human Sacrifice in Mesoamerica: A Conference at Dumbarton Oaks, October 13th and 14th, 1979*, ed. Elizabeth Hill Boone (Washington, D. C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1979), 7-48.

with Tetzcatlipóca as diviner and obsidian as a tool for prophecy further reinforces Six-Deer's link to healing powers and might indicate her later use of the flint to foresee the future. Additionally, this possibility joins the young girl with both ancestral Mesoamerican prognosticators who used ritual books (codices) to determine the day's fate and contemporary curandera/os in their roles as espiritistas/os or mediums. Therefore, the bearing of this object by the child identifies Six-Deer as an initiate with emerging power, one who forges a new beginning, and as one who makes a sacrificial journey of transformation on behalf of others.

The Body as Site of Sacrifice in *Codex Delilah*

In the sixth panel of *Codex Delilah*, Six-Deer encounters La-Velia, a transparent reference to New Mexican community organizer and indigenous activist Velia Silva, since Silva herself posed for the photographs used by Montoya. By situating this panel's events in 1969 at the height of the Chicano Movement, we understand La-Velia as a Chicana activist. Six-Deer begins her journey through this register in the upper left-hand side of the panel where she discovers La-Velia and extends her arm in greeting. The artist locates the pair in rural southern New Mexico on a dusty road near a chile field. Returning the gesture with a hearty "Hello, *compañera* (companion)," La-Velia appears below and smaller in scale than Six-Deer. When Six-Deer asks for directions to Aztlán, La-Velia remains illusive stating that

some consider Aztlán a state of mind.[341] When she learns about the farmworker movement from La-Velia, Six-Deer decides to accompany her on a *peregrinación* (pilgrimage) to Santa Fe on behalf of striking chile pickers.

Montoya pictures both La-Velia and Six-Deer within the pilgrimage actively moving through the space against a background of protesting figures that echo shouts of "Huelga" (Strike) and "Ya Basta" (It Is Enough). La-Velia appears twice in the visual narrative. In one image, she carries a wooden box, suggesting either a platform where she makes impromptu speeches or a container that transports the produce picked by farmworkers. Montoya reveals her sense of humor when she refers to the wooden crate as La-Velia's "soapbox."[342] In Panel 6, Six-Deer's body appears expansive and relaxed perhaps reflecting an increased confidence and a growing sense of power resulting from this important assertion of her agency. We see her in the center of the lower third of the panel looking directly at the viewer with a broad smile on her face and her hands clasped in delight. After creating a "U" shaped path through the space, she exits smiling in the upper right-hand corner, balanced in size and position with her initial image on the opposite side of the register.

Within the context of El Movimiento, what kinds of meanings does the artist

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[341] *Codex Delilah*, 1992, Panel 6, Register 4.
[342] Delilah Montoya, interview with the author, Lockhart, Texas, digital audio and digital video recording, 26 November 2003.

map on the bodies of La-Velia and Six-Deer? Mesa-Bains states that, despite the conquest and the annexation of Mexico by the United States as a result of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, contemporary cultural practices in the United States contain an awareness of the Chicana/o body as both individual and collective. This awareness arises from the holistic base of curanderismo and illustrates a remnant of memory from colonial and indigenous times.[343] By juxtaposing the terms *carnal* and *communitas,* I will discuss how the figures of La-Velia and Six-Deer symbolize concepts of body, spirituality, and sacrifice.

Carnalismo*, Chicana/o Collectivity, and *Compadrazgo

The English word "carnal" refers to the body, its sensual needs and desires, while the Spanish word *carnal* contains additional layers of meaning. Because of El Movimiento's emphasis on collective identity and the connection between members of *la raza* (the Mexican race)*,* the term carnalismo*,* or brotherhood, re-circulated and gained increasing favor in the late 1960s. Thirty-five years later, Chicanos still use the term carnal as a slang expression to describe and identify a close male bond of friendship. For example, a typical greeting between friends might be, "*Orale,* carnal" ("O.K." or "Right on, brother!"). José Limón points out the multiple dimensions of the term and the connection between meat, the body, maleness, and machismo in the

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[343] Mesa-Bains, "Chicano Bodily Aesthetics," 7-9.

Chicano imagination in his work on South Texas Mexican-American life.[344]

In addition to political ideology, existing social structures encourage collective responsibility and support close bonds between men that blur the distinction between individual and collective bodies. Compadrazgo, a practice with indigenous roots, continues today throughout Mexico and Greater Mexico.[345] Used in indigenous and mestizo societies as a means of social control and to increase community stability, *compadres* were often chosen because of their social status and financial resources. Initiated at a child's baptism, this practice consists of a lifelong commitment between the child's father and another male in the community, often a family member. During the baptismal ritual, the men become compadres*,* pledged partners dedicated to the spiritual and financial well-being of the child, with the father's friend assuming the position of *padrino* or godfather.[346] Within its contemporary practice, men continue to create and uphold these bonds, while they also refer to each other as compadres without the official responsibility of compadrazgo.

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[344] José Limón, *Dancing with the Devil: Society and Cultural Poetics in Mexican-American South Texas* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994), 136-138.
[345] Américo Paredes created this term to describe the geographic territories within Mexico and the United States where people of Mexican descent embrace an identity rooted in Mexicanness. See Américo Paredes, *With a Pistol in His Hand: A Border Ballad and Its Hero* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1958), 129-130.
[346] The commitment of compadrazgo and comadrazgo can also take place through marriage and confirmation.

Carnalisma, Comadrazgo, Tierra, y Cuerpo

If men have carnal and compadre to mark significant relationships and reflect a sense of somatic interdependence, what terms reflect significant relationships between women? Compadrazgo was initially practiced primarily between men. However, the practice of *comadrazgo* was later increasingly performed by women. Like compadres*, comadres* pledge their bond at baptisms, confirmations, and weddings and form a special bond of responsibility dedicated to the child's welfare. If not already a family member, the *madrina* or godmother assumes a critical role through this practice and becomes a member of the extended family body. Like men, women may also refer to close friends as comadre and *comadrita* to describe special bonds of friendship without the official pledge of comadrazgo.[347] While the terms comadre and compadre have been shortened to *compa* over time,[348] other expressions that reflect connection between women include compañera*,* as in *una buena compañera* (a good companion/comrade) or *buena amiga mía* (my good friend).

Significantly, as Mesa-Bains has observed, women use the nuanced descriptor of carnal in its female form, *carnala,* to describe their close friendship or kinship

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[347] For a literary illustration of this practice, see Denise Chávez, "Compadre," in *The Last of the Menu Girls* (Houston: Arte Publico Press, 1986), 137-190.
[348] Castro, *Chicano Folklore: A Guide to the Folktales, Traditions, Rituals and Religious Practices of Mexican-Americans*, 69.

bonds.[349] I suggest that affectional relationships between women imply a *carnal*(ity), a shared knowledge based in the physical experience of the female body. Expressed at the level of body, this shared sense of self forges a sisterhood that demonstrates a connection to historical memory and women's relationship to the earth. The bond of *carnalisma* (sisterhood) imbricates flesh, land, and spirituality by recalling the memory of ancient sacrificial practices conducted as a means to guarantee the community's welfare.

Sacrifice and the Body: Ancient, Colonial, and Contemporary Practices

As we have seen, in many Mesoamerican traditions people offered droplets of blood or the body in its entirety to their deities to maintain the balance of the universe, to ensure the regeneration of the earth, and to replicate the sacrifice of the gods at Teotihuacán. Roberta and Peter Markman explain,

> Metaphorically the sacrifice of life's blood, that is, returning life to its spiritual source, was necessary for the continuation of the endless cycle of transformations through which life was constantly created and maintained. Human beings, helpless without the gods, must sacrifice their blood in return for the continuation of the rains, the growth of the corn, and the healing of illnesses.[350]

A further layer of historical and spiritual memory where community, sacrifice, and the

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[349] Mesa-Bains, "Chicano Bodily Aesthetics," 8-9.
[350] Roberta H. Markman and Peter T. Markman, *The Flayed God* (San Francisco, 1992), 180.

body intersect developed during the Colonial period in Mexico. At that time, ancient spiritual practices blended with the practices of Catholicism, the religion of the conquerors. Celebrated in the Catholic Mass, the sacrament of Holy Communion ritually reenacts Christ's shedding of blood for the redemption of sinners, paralleling the ancient Mesoamerican sacrificial practices discussed earlier. During an act of consecration within the Mass, known as the Transubstantiation, bread and wine become ritually transformed into the body and blood of Christ. Members of the congregation then consume these humble materials, actually absorbing some of God's body into their own. The sacrifice of Christ's body and blood, given in service to the community of believers, symbolically intertwines with ancient and contemporary practices.

Ancient sacrificial rituals conducted on behalf of the community constitute an historical memory, evoked and brought forward in time. Updated within today's contemporary urban locations, carnalas proclaim the connection between themselves, their communities, and the earth when they mark their bodies with symbols that demonstrate their allegiance to a specific *barrio* (neighborhood) or a symbol of Chicana/o national identity.[351] The carving of place in the skin and on the surface of the body through the process of tattooing demonstrates their willingness to dedicate

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[351] Mesa-Bains, "Chicano Bodily Aesthetics," 9.

their flesh (and blood) on behalf of their sisters and their communities.

The Body and the Skin as Inscribed Sites of Memory, History and Community

In his discussion of bodily practices as part of the process of memory, Paul Connerton differentiates between two forms of social practice that he terms "incorporating" and "inscribing."[352] According to Connerton, a social practice that incorporates memory consists of current actions performed by the body (either by an individual or a group), while an inscribing practice requires a site for the accumulation and recovery of information. He cites the archiving and containment of written information within familiar contemporary sites such as photographs, computers, and audiotapes as exemplars of inscribing practices. In addition to enacting a ritual that dedicates their physical selves to their comrades and local group, I suggest that the tattooing of place upon the skin by contemporary *cholas* or carnalas forms another practice of inscription as defined by Connerton that functions to preserve historical and spiritual memory.

Tattoos in Chicana/o Visual Representation

Images of tattooed bodies abound in Chicana/o figural representation. From César Martínez' sensually beefy man in *Hombre Que le Gustan las Mujeres* (1985) and (2000) (Fig. 4.2), and *Wrong-Headed Hombre* (1989), to Luis Jiménez's loving

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[352] Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 72-73.

offering in *Para Luis* (1992), to Eloy Torres's portrait *Diane Gamboa* (2000), to Vincent Valdez's evocation of the Zootsuit Riots in *Kill the Pachuco Bastard!* (2001), these representations catalog the variety of sites, uses, and images inscribed on Chicana/o bodies. Additionally, as described in Chapter 2, Delilah Montoya has photographically documented tattoos of the Virgin of Guadalupe on various parts of the human body. Most notably, Montoya has depicted Felix Martínez in her work *La Guadalupana*, a photomural from 1998.[353] In this work, Montoya presents a three-quarter-length view of Martínez's unclothed back that show a detailed, large-scale tattoo of the Virgen of Guadalupe. The artist frames this central image with colored photographs of arms and backs of other people tattooed with Guadalupe's image taken from an earlier photographic series. While both Chicana and Chicano artists present tattooed bodies in their work and since my purpose here is to demonstrate the overlapping issues of the sacred, the body, and geographic location within Chicana representations of tattooing, I limit the following discussion to tattooed female bodies and their representation by Chicana artists.

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[353] I have discussed this image in another incarnation entitled "El Guadalupano" in Chapter 2. For an analysis of Montoya's "La Guadalupana" as it relates to photography, spirituality, and the altar form in Chicana/o art, see Sorell, "Behold Their Natural Affinities: Revelations About the Confluence of Chicana Photography and Altarmaking," 21-28. For an important essay on the image of the Virgin of Guadalupe, her appearance on skin and cloth, and issues of personal devotion, see Victor A. Sorell, "Guadalupe's Emblematic Presence Endures in New Mexico: Investing the Body with the Virgin's Miraculous Image," in *Nuevomexicano Cultural Legacy: Forms, Agencies, and Discourse*, ed. Francisco A. Lomelí, Victor A. Sorell, and Genaro M. Padilla (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002), 203-245.

Ester Hernández: *La Ofrenda*

Significantly, Ester Hernández illustrates this pledge of one's flesh in a silkscreen from 1988 (Fig. 4.3). In a work entitled *La Ofrenda* (The Offering), Hernández presents a multi-layered image that implicates the female (lesbian) body, desire, religious devotion, and carnal and spiritual love. The artist depicts a woman's back nude from the waist up, the surface of her back covered with a multi-colored tattoo of the Virgin of Guadalupe. The artist brackets the figure of the woman with a solid black background to direct the viewer's attention to the work's central image. The woman's head, turned in profile to the right, reveals a contemplative expression, her right ear adorned with a solitary crystal earring. Her hairstyle references both the punk "Mohawk" and closely cropped lesbian cuts popular at the time that combined shaved areas with starkly contrasting sections of longer hair. A sole hand (presumably female) enters the frame from the left side and simultaneously presents both the Virgin and the woman with an offering of a voluptuous pink rose. The artist takes an icon of Chicana/o national and spiritual identity and inverts it meaning by portraying the scene from a viewpoint that illustrates female agency and desire. Hernández contests the image's traditional meaning and provides an alternative to the male gaze by imaging the Virgin from a female and, most importantly in this instance, lesbian point

of view.[354] The tattooed woman marks in her flesh her deep devotion to the Virgin of Guadalupe and the communities she represents and, with this act, declares a place in the Chicana/o nation and its expressions of spirituality for Chicana lesbians. Holly Barnet-Sanchez points out the further implications of this image.

> By uniting lesbian love with devotion to the Virgin there is a tacit understanding that love between two women is also blessed. It is possible to take the image one step further by interpreting the presence of the Virgin not as a tattoo which is the result of human intervention, but rather as a divine appearance, something akin to her manifestation on the cloak of Juan Diego in 1532. If this is the case, then the body itself has become truly sacred, sanctified by the divine love of the Virgin as well as by her partner..."[355]

Following Barnet-Sanchez's reading, both the body as container and the skin as surface become sites of sanctification.

Alma López: *Tattoo* and *Lupe y Sirena*

Alma López created a more recent example of the overlapping concerns of the

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[354] For more information on the contribution of Chicanas in the field of printmaking, see Holly Barnet-Sanchez, "Where are the Chicana Printmakers? Presence and Absence in the Work of Chicana Artists of the Movimiento," in *Just Another Poster? Chicano Graphic Arts in California/¿Sólo un cartel más? Artes Gráficas Chicanas en California*, ed. Chon A. Noriega (Santa Barbara: University Art Museum, University of California, 2001), 117-149. For early Chicana artists' feminist reclamations of the Virgin of Guadalupe, see "Feminist Visions," in *Chicano Art: Resistance and Affirmation, 1965-1985*, ed. Richard Griswold del Castillo, Teresa McKenna, and Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano (Los Angeles, CA: Wight Art Gallery, University of California, 1991), 322-331. For lesbian readings of the Virgin of Guadalupe, see Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano, "The Lesbian Body in Latina Cultural Production," in *Entiendes?: Queer Readings, Hispanic Writings*, ed. Emilie L. Bergman and Paul Julian Smith (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 181-187, Trujillo, "La Virgen de Guadalupe and Her Reconstruction in Chicana Lesbian Desire," 214-231. Alma López's digital print *Our Lady*, 1999, constitutes another re-imagining of the Virgin of Guadalupe.

[355] Barnet-Sanchez, "Where are the Chicana Printmakers?," 144.

body, inscribed memory, spirituality, and physical location in a digital image from 1999 entitled *Tattoo*. In this work, López presents a man in the process of tattooing a woman's back (Fig. 4.4). The black outlines of the tattoo reveal the incomplete image of an earlier work created by López entitled *Lupe y Sirena in Love*, an iris print also from 1999 (Fig. 4.5). In *Lupe y Sirena*, the artist takes the iconic figures of the Virgin of Guadalupe and of Sirena (the Mermaid or Siren) from the popular Mexican game, the lotería, and depicts the women as lovers.[356] López poses the women in an erotic embrace with Guadalupe cradling Sirena's breast. A Viceroy butterfly supports the crescent moon underneath the women's feet.[357] The artist frames the embracing women with light-skinned colonial cherubs while backgrounding these images with

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[356] The lotería, also known as Mexican bingo, is a game of chance consisting of a rectangular playing board and a deck of 54 playing cards. The playing board consists of sixteen images arranged in four rows of four images each. Each playing card in the deck contains an image, the name of the image, and a number. The caller or game leader picks out a card from the deck and calls out the card's name, "Sirena" for example. Players use beans, pennies, or whatever is handy to mark the image on their playing boards. A player wins by accumulating four pictures in a horizontal, vertical, or diagonal line. Each picture is associated with a traditional saying that often includes plays on words and moral maxims. Players can demonstrate their wit by composing short poems or sayings inspired by the images. Families often use the game to teach the alphabet, numbers, reading, and proper social behavior. Another way to play the game is for the caller to recite the traditional saying that describes the card's image. The player who can answer the riddle or pun wins the round. The saying associated with Sirena is, "Con los cantos de sirena no te vayas a marear (Don't get dizzy with the songs of the mermaid)." For a contemporary update of the popular Don Clemente images and texts, see Juan Felipe Herrera and Artemio Rodríguez, *Lotería Cards and Fortune Poems: A Book of Lives* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1999). For examples of how other Chicana/o artists use lotería images in their work, see Keller et al., *Contemporary Chicana and Chicano Art*, 286-295.

[357] For Alma López's explanation of this symbol and the genesis of this work, see Alma López, "Mermaids, Butterflies, and Princesses," *Aztlan* 25:1 (Spring 2000): 189-191. For analysis of the larger body of López's work, see Barnet-Sanchez, "Where are the Chicana Printmakers?," 117-149, Reina Alejandra Prado Saldívar, "Goddesses, Sirens, Lupes y Angel Cholas--The Work of Alma López," *Aztlan* 25:1 (Spring 2000): 195-203.

the text "*MAPA de la Guerra de Los E. U. con Mejico*" (Map of the War of the United States with Mexico). López underscores the central figures with a diagonal section of the fence that separates the two countries intertwining the themes of love and war in geographic space.

In *Tattoo*, the artist places the male tattoo artist in the extreme lower left-hand side as he fashions the central image from *Lupe y Sirena in Love* on the woman's back. The jean-clad woman, her luxuriant black hair cascading over the uppermost part of the tattoo-in-progress, places her right arm akimbo on her waist. Like Hernández's earlier image, López's woman is partially nude and faces away from the viewer, this time in one-quarter profile view. Here again, the woman's back engulfs the vast majority of the picture plane. However in contrast to Hernández's work, in *Tattoo* the artist's intention appears more ambiguous as López may be presenting her central female figure to the desiring gaze of both female and male viewers. The inclusion of the male tattoo artist lends ambiguity to the work, not only because the male artist becomes the agent of López's imagination, but also because his arm possesses tattoos of women. A close examination of his tattoo site shows the heads of two young women separated by a spider web. More tattoos, hidden by latex gloves, mark his hands and other sections of his body partially obscurred by a navy tank shirt. So, López presents the viewer with a contradictory image, an (assumed) heterosexual man imprinting an image of lesbian love and erotic power on the partially nude back

of a lesbian woman. The tattoo artist frames the embracing women with the mandorla, the halo or radiant light that emanates from the Virgin, thus imbuing these figures with spiritual power as well. Despite the multiple levels of interpretation possible for this work, López clearly identifies this woman's body as a site of lesbian desire and identity by using the eroticized image of Lupe y Sirena.

Besides erotic and spiritual power, López interlaces the human bodies of her subjects with the power of place. In her consideration of figuration within Chicana/o art, Amalia Mesa-Bains notes that contemporary barrio practices of tattooing often include street names or neighborhood designations. She states, "In this kind of stylization the body is forever rooted in its land and is marked by both the loss of land and the pride in historic territory."[358] López imbricates the work with a concern for land and geographic location when she juxtaposes her figures with two sites, the Los Angeles skyline and a section of the fence along the San Diego/Tijuana border. While these locations appear in the image's background and not on the woman's flesh, they serve to imbricate her body with the concerns of place, memory, and the contested history of the border between the United States of Mexico and the United States of North America.

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[358] Mesa-Bains, "Chicano Bodily Aesthetics," 9.

Carnal*(ity) and *Communitas

Now, I would like to complicate this discussion of carnal(ity), posited as an embodied expression of sisterhood or brotherhood that implicates sacrifice, by overlaying Victor Turner's concept of communitas. As discussed in the previous chapter, Arnold Van Gennep articulated an underlying pattern in rituals, or rites of passage, and delineated three stages contained within these rituals as 1) separation, 2) liminality, and 3) return or reincorporation.[359] The second stage of this process, liminality, refers to the *limen*, or threshold, that represents the crossing from one role, one position, or one state of consciousness to another. Within this state of transition, Turner uses the Latin word communitas to describe "a relation quality of full unmediated communication, even communion, which arises spontaneously in all kinds of groups, situations, and circumstances."[360] I suggest that when Six-Deer and La-Velia make a political pilgrimage to Santa Fe in support of the organizing struggles of New Mexican farmworkers, they experience a form of communitas, "spontaneous communitas," a special sense of connection to each other, to those who march with them, and to the larger Chicana/o community. Further, this connection arises specifically because of their concern for others.

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[359] Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, 11, 21.
[360] Turner, "Variations," 46. Also see Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1969), 96-97. Here Turner emphasizes that this communion exists between "equal individuals."

Particularly pertinent to this discussion is Turner's consideration of identity as a fundamental part of communitas.

> In our society, it seems that the small groups which nourish communitas, do so by withdrawing voluntarily from the mainstream…The social category becomes the basis of recruitment. People who are similar in one important characteristic - sex, age, ethnicity, religion.…withdraw symbolically, even actually from the total system, from which they may in various degrees feel themselves "alienated," to seek the glow of communitas among those with whom they share some cultural or biological feature they take to be their most signal mark of identity.[361]

Turner develops his concept of spontaneous communitas as part of a larger, more formal construction, termed "ideological communitas." Developing from a base of spontaneous communitas, ideological communitas helps form "an utopian blue print for the reform of society."[362] Six-Deer and La-Velia then represent Turner's notion of ideological communitas and express the rapport among those who participated in El Movimiento, those who helped forge a community based on connection to each other with sacrifice at its base. In *Codex Delilah,* La-Velia symbolizes a Chicana Everywoman who reflects this understanding of body as individual and collective. As such, she represents the untold effort of women who struggled for basic needs of peoples of Mexican descent within El *Movimiento* and beyond and forms another

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[361] Turner, "Variations," 47.
[362] Ibid., 46.

important member of the genealogy of healers created by Six-Deer's journey. When La-Velia and Six-Deer march to Santa Fe on behalf of striking chile pickers, they not only embody the *concept* of sacrifice but their bodies become *the site* of sacrifice as well.

La-Velia and Six-Deer's willingness to forego bodily comfort for the betterment of the community parallels sacrifices made by contemporary Chicana activists. Dolores Huerta dramatically illustrates this parallel. Huerta, co-founder with César and Helen Chávez of the United Farm Workers Union, epitomizes this concept of embodied sacrifice in the service of community. In 1989, in front of one of San Francisco's elegant Union Square hotels, the Sir Francis Drake, Huerta staged a protest against President George Bush, Sr.'s policies on pesticides. In a demonstration that turned ugly, the San Francisco policemen severely beat Huerta along with other protestors. She suffered several broken ribs, required emergency surgery, and ultimately, lost her spleen.[363] Like Dolores Huerta, La-Velia and a budding Six-Deer, embody contemporary expressions of sacrifice that imbricate carnal(ity) and communitas while paralleling Mesoamerican spiritual practices effected to ensure the continuity and well being of a people.

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[363] Huerta's subsequent lawsuit forced the San Francisco Police Department to develop new policies regarding the treatment of protesters.

The Body as Site of Desire, Violence, and Redemption

In the second panel of *Codex Delilah*, Six-Deer encounters a conflated figure from the Mexicana/o/Chicana/o pantheon that merges aspects of the Wailing Woman (La Llorona) with Malintzin Tenépal, Hernán Cortés's translator, also known as Doña Marina or La Malinche. Montoya names her version of these *personajes* (characters) Llora-Llora-Malinche.[364] Throughout the second register, Montoya repeatedly places Llora's body in various poses that communicate intense suffering. In frenzied anguish, she pulls her hair and cries out for her lost children, ultimately searching in vain. Her body becomes a channel for the expression of intense emotion, her torment evident in its extreme physical tension. Her body and spirit exhausted from their performance of grief, the artist pictures her finally spent, dropped in a catatonic heap in the lower right-hand side of the composition.

In contrast, the artist portrays Six-Deer only twice in this panel, giving the weight of representation to Llora. Six-Deer's body appears slightly smaller than Llora's who physically overwhelms the register with the immensity of her suffering and grief. A bewildered but empathic witness, Six-Deer stands on the far left side of the composition trying to grasp the ramifications of what transpires. Her footprints map a path through various images of the Conquest that chart the destruction and

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[364] This could be understood as "Cry-Cry-Malinche," a name that references both the grief visited upon the peoples of Mesoamerica by Cortés and that expressed by La Llorona at the loss of her children.

violence she witnesses as she travels through Tenochtitlán, the center of the Mexica/Aztec empire. We see her again in the upper right hand corner of the register glancing down and touching her belly in a gesture that emphasizes an important consequence of this historical moment.

Montoya's use of Llora-Llora-Malinche produces the body as a conflicted site of desire, transgression, and creativity. This character embodies Woman[365] in multiple states; as sexually realized, as mature and procreative, as sexually betrayed and abandoned, and as sexually violated. Within the conflation of La Malinche and La Llorona, each persona contains a dual aspect; woman as transgressor and transgressed, as betrayer and betrayed. If we consider Llora-Llora-Malinche in her aspect as La Malinche, several descriptions recount that Malintzin Tenépal lived a privileged life as a member of a noble family until her mother remarried. Wishing to ensure the ascension to rulership by her son from this marriage, Malintzin's mother sought to displace her firstborn daughter's birthright and sold her into slavery. Betrayed by her mother, Malintzin later "betrays" her people when she assumes her role as *lengua* (tongue/translator) for Hernán Cortés. Understood in many accounts and representations as the bringer of death and destruction to Mesoamerica and its peoples, Malintzin, as abandoned child and transgressed adolescent, later becomes the

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[365] The so-called universal category of "woman" has been widely critiqued by gender theorists. See Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

supposed transgressor.

In its dual role as transgressed and possible transgressor, Llora's body implies sexual desire, although not necessarily hers. In her aspect as La Malinche, she represents the object of male gaze, desire, and violence. Understood as the symbol of a raped womanhood, this character embodies the pain, rage, and anguish of sexualized violence. Although Montoya emphasizes Llora in her altered state of grief for her children, one can also view this performance of anguish as the aftermath of sexual assault. Whether the historical Malintzin was a victim of sexual violence or not, she symbolizes the multitudes of women of color who experienced this brutal transgression during the Conquest and those who experience it today.

Llora's concurrent status as betrayed and betrayer parallels the similar construction of La Llorona.[366] If we consider Llora-Llora-Malinche in her aspect as La Llorona, the generally accepted story positions her as an indigenous woman living a contented life with her Conquistador lover/husband and their three children, a life that indicates sexual desire and possibly, fulfillment on her part. When her husband abandons her for an upper class Spanish woman, La Llorona drowns their children in a moment of desperation. When she takes her children's lives, she crosses from

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[366] For recent scholarship on this topic, see Renee Domino Pérez, "Revitalizing the Legend: Manifestations and Cultural Readings of La Llorona in Contemporary Literature and Film" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1998).

transgressed or betrayed woman and simultaneously embodies the role of transgressor and betrayer of the protective responsibility of motherhood.

Creation as Redemptive Act

Sexual longing and contact, whether reciprocal or not, can transform the female body from the site of desire to the site of creation. Montoya imagines the bodies of Lora, La Malinche, La Llorona, and Six-Deer in their procreative aspect. When Llora advises Six-Deer that she carries a child, Llora enacts the ritual transmission of the bodies of knowledge regarding pregnancy and childbirth from one generation of women to another.[367] Held deep in the body's memory, spiritual practices and other cultural traditions related to childbearing pass by word of mouth from mother to daughter, from *tía* (aunt) to *sobrina* (niece), from older sister to younger sister, and prepare each initiate for the process of pregnancy and the act of birth.

Montoya uses this moment in the narrative to recuperate the traditional viewpoint that regards La Malinche as betrayer of her people. Montoya positions La Malinche within the codex as the sixth portent of the Mexica/Aztecs,[368] a series of

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[367] In this panel of *Codex Delilah*, Llora-Llora-Malinche says, "All is lost, but I can tell you're carrying the child of the invaders." "What are you saying?" asks the perplexed Six-Deer. "What you heard. I can see what others can't." *Codex Delilah*, 1992, Panel 2, Register 4.

[368] Delilah Montoya, Telephone conversation with author, 17 October 2001. In the *Florentine Codex,* Sahagún's informants recall numerous omens that foretold the coming of the Spanish. "The sixth bad omen: The people heard a weeping woman night after night. She passed by in the middle of the night,

ominous signs that foretold future disaster. In this way, the artist frees La Malinche from the heavy burden of traitor. While Montoya chronicles the destruction of indigenous peoples and their ways of life as a result of the Conquest, the artist does not place blame or responsibility on Llora-Llora-Malinche. Instead, she emphasizes the creation of the mestiza/o as a redemptive act contributed by the bodies of La Malinche, La Llorona, and Six-Deer when Montoya illustrates Llora cautioning the child, "Love your child of mixed bloods for he is the new race who will survive and populate the land."[369]

Montoya included this aspect of *Codex Delilah* at the urging of Cecilio García-Camarillo who felt it important to acknowledge the new race being born from this historical moment. García-Camarillo and Montoya viewed the creation of the mestiza/o as a "gift" and the artist based her depiction of this event on a family story. When one of her sisters was around six years of age, she began walking around the house with her upper body curled forward and her arms cradled around her belly. When Montoya's mother asked the girl what she was doing, Montoya's sister replied, "Mom, I'm protecting my babies!" Montoya wanted to convey this sense of youthful naivety and characterized Six-Deer's response to her pregnancy from this point of

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wailing and crying out in a loud voice: "My children, we must flee far away from this city!" At other times she cried: "My children, where shall I take you?" Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, 1-2.

[369] *Codex Delilah*, 1992, Panel 2, Register 4.

view. Six-Deer replicates the pose of Montoya's sister (Fig. 4.6). The artist intended Six-Deer as the "symbolic carrier of the new race" and considered her the point of genesis for contemporary Chicanas. Recognizing that, "We were born out of the Conquest, out of Nepantla," Montoya honored rather than denigrated this result of the indigenous-European "encounter."[370]

Sacrifice and Salvation in *Codex Delilah*

In addition to birth or creation as an act of redemption, Montoya implicates the role of sacrifice as part of redemptive action later in the work. In the seventh and final panel of the codex, Six-Deer ascends to the summit of Sandía Mountain[371] east of Albuquerque, New Mexico and realizes her quest. Until this moment, the imprint of Six-Deer's footsteps recalled and replicated those used in various Mesoamerican codices to indicate movement through space and time. However, now the footprints end abruptly and only a single footprint enters the panel. Immediately, Six-Deer's footsteps transform into a flock of crows that encircle a dark and foreboding stone structure at the top of the panel. Here Montoya reveals the wit, grace, and elegant timing of an experienced storyteller. In a moment of revelation, the artist visually

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[370] I have taken the information and quotes contained in this paragraph from conversations between the artist and myself on 19 February 2005 in Atlanta, Georgia.

[371] Sandía Mountain, elevation 10, 678 feet, is the highest peak in the Sandía Mountain Range located directly east of Albuquerque, New Mexico. The Sandían people, one of nineteen groups of the Pueblo peoples, consider this a sacred site and incorporate the mountain in their daily spiritual practices. Sandíans speak the Tiwa language and are the smallest of the Pueblos numbering only five hundred people.

discloses another bodily site of sacred power connected to Six-Deer, an invisible willing helper. A spirit guide has accompanied the young (s)hero daily throughout her ordeal. In the pictorial narrative, the footprints, while recording the child's journey, have also indicated the presence of a *nagual*, or animal alter ego.[372] We understand the nagual as Six-Deer's spirit companion or guide, a protective force that she has not recognized until she realizes her personal power in this panel. The nagual appears aloft with outspread wings immediately above Six-Deer's head, much like a nimbus or halo (Fig 4.7).

The artist uses the nagual as another reference to Mesoamerican spirituality, to indicate that the old ways endure into the present (and future), and implicate an animal body as a site of spiritual power. A nagual is a shape-shifter and comes from the Náhuatl word *naualli,* meaning sorcerer or witch. Mesoamerican and indigenous shamans are said to possess the power to change form during trance states. The process of achieving these states is similar to the methods used by curandera/os who practice on the mental and spiritual levels, where during enhanced states of consciousness, they contact other realms beyond everyday reality, receive guidance, and transmit the necessary information to effect cures or healing.

Having achieved Aztlán*,* Six-Deer encounters a disturbingly ill and emaciated

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[372] Delilah Montoya, interview by the author, Lockhart, Texas, digital audio and digital video recording, 26 November 2003.

Crow-Woman who declares, "I'm no longer the nourisher of life but sickness and death itself." Asserting that Six-Deer has arrived too late, she instructs the young healer to leave.[373] Although Montoya makes clear through the photograph in Register 3 and in the text in Register 4 that the events in this panel take place on the Sandía Summit, the artist conflates two New Mexican mountain ranges. The United States once used the Manzano Mountains, directly south of Albuquerque, as a military base to store a live nuclear arsenal.[374] These weapons, implanted deep within Crow-Woman's breasts, have caused her illness. To indicate the disastrous potential of these weapons, the artist uses the same image from the first panel of the codex, the temple structure from Palenque placed at the uppermost section of Register 2. Montoya photographically alters the central columns of the structure and overlays them with images of missiles creating a shrine to military might and destructive power.

On the lower left-hand side of Register 2, Montoya places Six-Deer standing upright with outstretched arms in front of a kneeling Crow-Woman. In her hands, Six-Deer holds the flint and extends its sharp surface toward her elder. With this gesture, the Montoya indicates that Six-Deer's desarrollo has concluded and the young girl has attained her healing powers. This ascendance to power begins with a cleansing ritual

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[373] *Codex Delilah*, 1992, Panel 7, Register 4.

[374] The Armed Forces Special Weapons Command created Site Able, later named Manzano Base, in 1946, to house atomic weapons. The Manzano Weapons Storage Area (MWSA) was created through a series of tunnels bored deeply inside Manzano Mountain. Both weapons and plutonium were stored at MWSA until 1992. Nearby Kirtland Air Force Base currently manages these materials.

for Crow-Woman. Six-Deer will use the flint to make small incisions in the teacher's breasts, permitting the blood to flow from the ill woman until the nuclear missiles force themselves from her body.

By including this ritual, Montoya refers to Mesoamerican spiritual practices. Linda Schele and Mary Ellen Miller state that elite or royal bloodletting accompanied every rite of passage in Maya life.

> For kings, every stage in life, every event of political or religious importance, every significant period ending required sanctification through bloodletting. When buildings were dedicated, crops planted, children born, couples married or the dead buried, blood was given to express piety and call the gods into attendance.[375]

Using nettles, cactus spines, and blades of bone and obsidian, rulers cut incisions into their fingers, earlobes, and other body parts, and gathered the resulting droplets of blood on pieces of paper. When the paper became saturated with the sacrificial blood, it was burned in an offering to the deities. According to Maya belief, these daily offerings ensured the agricultural fertility, cosmic harmony, and the balance of the universe. A series of sculpted stone panels from Yaxchilán illustrates this rite.

Yaxchilán Lintel 24 depicts a night scene of royal bloodletting that occurred on October 28, 709 CE (Fig. 4.8). Sacrificial rituals of this type were one of the duties of

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[375] Linda Schele and Mary Ellen Miller, *The Blood of Kings: Dynasty and Ritual in Maya Art* (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1986), 175-176.

the ruling Maya elite. On this stone sculpture, Maya Queen Lady Xoc passes a rope with maguey spines through her tongue. On the left side of the stelae, her husband *Itzam Balam* or Shield Jaguar holds a torch to illuminate the scene. The drops of her blood fall on pieces of paper in the woven basket below. This image of Lady Xoc, taken in the context of the series of lintels at Yaxchilán (24, 25, 26) of which it is part**,** reveals a deeper message that parallels the situation of Six-Deer and Crow-Woman.

In the second in the series in the Yaxchilán lintel program, Lintel 25, Lady Xoc has reached an altered state of consciousness enhanced by the suffering and pain she has incurred during bloodletting. Here Lady Xoc, comprising only a small portion of the sculpture's format, gazes upward with an outstretched right hand while grasping the blood-gathering bowl in her left hand. Diagonally above her, the Maya War Serpent opens its jaws to emit the ruler Shield Jaguar, in the persona of divine warrior. Because of her altered consciousness, Lady Xoc can communicate with the dead.[376]

Just as Lady Xoc contacts this visionary warrior during a trance, Crow-Woman possesses the power to communicate with Ometeótl/Omecihúatl. Through purification rituals, Crow-Woman, much like contemporary curanderas/os, serves as medium for

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[376] For accounts of the events on this lintel program, see Linda Schele and Mary Ellen Miller, "Chapter 4, Bloodletting and the Vision Quest," in *The Blood of Kings: Dynasty and Ritual in Maya Art* (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1986), 175-208, Freidel, Schele, and Parker, *Maya Cosmos*, 207-210, Sharer, *The Ancient Maya*, 237-252, Simon Martin and Nikolai Grube, *Chronicle of the Maya Kings and Queens: Deciphering the Dynasties of the Ancient Maya* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2000), 116-137.

the gods. After Six-Deer restores Crow-Woman to health, the elder will speak to Omecihúatl, the female side of the "god of gods" and petition for an end to the conflict among her four sons, the four directions represented by the Bacabs in the codex's uppermost register. Six-Deer declares that after Crow-Woman communicates with the god(s), "Then you and I will speak the truth to the people. Together we can restore harmony to the hearts of humanity."[377] This panel completes the lineage of healers constructed by Six-Deer's quest. The healing powers of Six-Deer and a soon to be recovered Crow-Woman will unite and return the world to its proper balance. Through the sacrificial pilgrimage that is Six-Deer's journey, she realizes her healing powers, enacts the bloodletting ritual that heals the soma (body) of the earth understood as Crow-Woman, and performs the ultimate act of redemption when she saves the world from nuclear destruction.

By examining the performance, portrayal, and symbolic value of the bodies within Delilah Montoya's *Codex Delilah*, this chapter analyzed the intersection of the body, memory, and spirituality. The work positioned the body as the site of sacrifice and community; of violation, creativity, and redemption; and as archive of community history and tradition. Using memory, the artist reconstructed the indigenous female body, its contemporary Chicana figuration, and the wisdom these physical sites

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[377] *Codex Delilah*, 1992, Panel 7, Register 4.

contain. With the recuperation of the Chicana body, Montoya established a lineage of female healers of the physical and spiritual body thereby constructing a healing genealogy for contemporary Chicana/os that visually connects ancient traditions with present practices. In this way, Montoya's codex forms a cumulative historical narrative of peoples, sites, and practices while serving as a storage system for a body of knowledge remembered, re-invented, and reconstructed.

Positing that Montoya's work sets out to re-assemble the bodies of knowledge torn apart by the Conquest, this section of the work sought to demonstrate the codex as performative location and as metaphor in the following manner: 1) it provides a site for an alternate representation of the either ignored or exoticized Indígena/Mexicana/ Chicana body, 2) it recuperates and preserves bodies of knowledge(s) destroyed by European contact now re-imagined by the artist, and 3) it creates a female (s)hero who embodies these knowledge(s) destroyed by European contact and suppressed during the following 500 years. Lastly, the codex's main character, Six-Deer, constitutes a living archive of embodied knowledge that functions as repository for the collective memory of a people.

Finally, the codex as body, a repository of affect, events, and memories, provides a source for continuing histories and a site for the creation of new memories. Ultimately, in its role as body, I suggest that the artwork can function as a site of healing, serving to repair the ruptured, violated, Chicana/o body and recover the

grievous losses initiated at First Contact. Tomás Ybarra-Frausto has stated that the artists of ancient indigenous cultures "…had a sacred mission: to empower and sanctify the masses through their creations."[378] Just as Six-Deer seeks healing for her people, so Delilah Montoya provides this gift for the larger community through her artwork, an artwork that carries on the sacred mission of pre-contact books. Activated by the viewing process, *Codex Delilah* can involve the viewer in a ritual of *limpienza* or cleaning and can provide a collective cure to restore harmony to the fragmented Chicano/a psyche and soma. The following chapter continues the discussion of the body by exploring the notion of the codex as conceptual place of performance.

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[378] Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, "Santa Barraza: A Borderland Chronicle," in *Santa Barraza: Artist of the Borderlands*, ed. Maria Herrera-Sobek (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2001).

Chapter 5

Codex Delilah as Site and Object of Performance

The previous chapter examined the human bodies in *Codex Delilah* and demonstrated how they produced the sacred through an analysis of their symbolic meaning, their pose, their historic and mythic context, and their performance of spiritual practices. This chapter of the dissertation extends the previous discussion of the codex and the exploration of its additional meaning(s) to a set of larger theoretical questions. First, the study suggests that the physical "site" of the codex, its form, structure, composition, and characters encourage a consideration of this artwork as a place and object of performance. By "place and object of performance," I mean that the codex forms the physical object or structure that houses a particular performed narrative. In order to examine the concept of performance in relationship to *Codex Delilah,* this chapter analyzes the artwork using work crafted by Elizabeth Hill Boone and Johanna Drucker. Following Boone,[379] the study suggests that the codex form, its individual pages, and its format as a whole, create a place for the staging of bodies that can be understood as a performance space. Following Drucker,[380] the study proposes

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[379] Boone, "Migration Histories as Ritual Performance," 121-151.
[380] Johanna Drucker, "The Book as Conceptual Space (Performance and Exhibition)," in *The Century of Artists' Books* (New York: Granary Books, 1995), 309-333.

that Montoya's conceptual use of the book form produced the codex as a site and object of performance.

Second, the chapter introduces the reader to a specific trajectory in dance theory, dance ethnography, and theatre and links this trajectory with theories from the field of education. I use pioneering concepts developed by dance critic and theorist John Martin and ground my analysis in educator Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences. I augment this foundation with work developed by dance ethnographer Deidre Sklar on embodied and "felt" knowledge. Further, performance scholar Joseph Roach adds to this discussion with his work on how bodies contain, perform, and transmit historical and cultural knowledge. I use these theories in combination because they allow me to construct a specific model to: 1) interpret the codex as body and site of performance, and 2) analyze how and what the bodies within Montoya's artwork perform. This study embraces notions developed from both performance disciplines while acknowledging their divergence. Louise Steinman notes that theater and dance "share a common root, a common home." She clarifies the difference between the disciplines when she observes that dance is "of the present, of the moment," while theater "restores a sense of the past whether the events of a day, a life, or of an imagined prehistoric past."[381] Dance theory permits this author to speculate about the

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[381] Louise Steinman, *The Knowing Body: The Artist as Storyteller in Contemporary Performance*

sensations in the bodies of Six-Deer and other characters in *Codex Delilah*, the bodies of the viewer, and the bodies of the critic or art historian. Theory emerging from the discipline of theater permits this author to consider how the actions of the codex's characters restore the past in a contemporary performance.

Third, after positing *Codex Delilah* as conceptual space of performance and introducing the reader to supporting theories, the study examines how and what the bodies in the codex perform. Questions posed in this chapter are: How does Gardner's idea of multiple intelligences inform our reading of *Codex Delilah*? How are the body and performance implicated in the theories of Martin, Sklar, and Roach? Importantly for this study, how can these ideas, developed within the context of dance, education, and theatre, apply to an art object? What is the connection between these characters' performances of spiritual practices, female identity, and racial construction? And, in a larger application, how can art historians develop the concept of "kinesthetic empathy" and apply it to our work? Why would this be valuable? Lastly, this chapter provides a summary of the central points made by this study and calls for further research on *Codex Delilah* and advocates for an expansion of models used for art historical analysis along with a recognition of the importance of the Chicano adaptation of the codex form.

(Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 1986), 10-11.

Codex Delilah as Conceptual Performance Space

How can a three-dimensional object with painted and photographically produced "actors" be considered a performance site? The work of Boone and Drucker encourages the consideration of *Codex Delilah* as site and object of performance. Drucker has found that the book can function as a conceptual space of performance in two ways: 1) the form or object creates a conceptual piece that "returns the reader to the book as an object and space of potential," or 2) the artist uses the book form conceptually to echo a more traditionally conceived site of performance.[382] I hope to demonstrate how *Codex Delilah* fulfills the later category.

In some ways, *Codex Delilah* resembles a small-scale stage set, a model often used by theater directors when plotting the blocking (stage movement) in advance of the rehearsal period. Much like an artist "plays" with the compositional elements of an art object to find the most harmonious or effective arrangement, many, but certainly not all theatre directors, use miniature three-dimensional models of their proposed stage set to think through and shape movements taken by actors onstage. While *Codex Delilah's* two-dimensional format rules out an exact one-to-one correspondence, the various sections of the work delineated by Montoya reveal common elements that serve as points of comparison to this literal "model" and theatrically staged

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[382] Drucker, "The Book as Conceptual Space (Performance and Exhibition)," 309.

performances.

Scenes performed on stage generally: 1) establish a location where the action takes place, 2) identify a time when the action occurs through dialog, stage lighting, and costume and setting elements such as furniture or architectural style, and 3) show a person or people who enact certain events. Montoya's use of registers allows the viewer/audience a simultaneous experience of the narrative from multiple viewpoints. The artist creates a setting or physical location for the codex's events with the photographic "place glyphs" in the third register. Although this dissertation discusses the codex through an analysis of each panel as comprised of four registers, comments written by Montoya demonstrate her understanding of the middle zone as containing both the actions taken by her characters and the location where these events take place. Understood in this way, the characters literally "stand" on top of their setting as illustrated by the photographs at the bottom of the middle zone. In addition, the glyph series in the middle zone identifies the temporal element. Because most audiences cannot decipher the hieroglyphs, Montoya aids the viewer in identifying the time when the actions take place through the "period" clothing the characters wear in the second registers and in the text from the fourth register.

The artist's characters enact the codex's story in the middle zone. The footprint motif marks Six-Deer's movement through space that I suggest reveals the "blocking of the scene" by Montoya. The footprints chart the journey and its performance in

every panel of the work and literally diagram the movement for the viewer. The codex does not document the journey, but enacts it. The bodies of the characters perform a raced and gendered identity in formation and in process as declared in the artwork's title. Previous chapters have articulated how these bodies also perform and contain the sacred and serve as archives of bodies of knowledge reconstructed by the artist.

Some plays present simultaneous action on separate parts of the stage, either using a two-story set that displays the action(s) of both levels at once or a set that shows the performance of interior and exterior scenes in unison.[383] This practice parallels the experience of Montoya's codex because the viewer can examine and be aware of the range of events the artist portrays at the same time. Further, when encountering the artwork, the viewer can physically move back from an intensive investigation of a single panel of the work to contemplate the work as a whole or a series of panels simultaneously. The increased physical distance allows the viewer to reflect on how the actions of each individual panel connect to the story as a whole. Furthermore, the deity figures in Register 1 resemble a convention found in many Greek plays, such the *Oedipus* and *Orestian* trilogies, where scenes present the

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[383] In two examples from popular culture, the various registers in *Codex Delilah* somewhat resemble the various vertically stacked floors in the apartment building Jimmy Stewart voyeuristically (and simultaneously) observes in Alfred Hitchcock's film "Rear Window" from 1954. Additionally, in 1991 film director Peter Greenaway presented his remake of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and used emerging film technology to split the screen in *Prospero's Books,* thereby presenting multiple points of view in concert.

Olympian Gods or a Greek chorus that comment on the underlying cause for the actions that take place on earth (below). The Greek pantheon literally or metaphorically looks "down" from Mount Olympus on the events as they occur. In alternate staging, the Greek Gods like Greek *chori*, stand onstage to the side of the central action and insert their viewpoint as dictated by the play's author. In Montoya's "staging," the Bacabs remain in their celestial abode in all but two scenes. Only in Panels 2 and 5 do the Bacabs interact outside of the deity zone.

In the middle zone, Montoya placed ejaculatory speech bubbles that broadcast the panel's central theme. I have previously compared this convention to the use in popular culture cartoons of enclosed captions or phrases emerging from a character's mouth. In another important comparison, the actors in *El Teatro Campesino*[384] (The Workers' Theater) wore signs around their neck with words such as "Patron," "Rotten Grape," or "Esquirol" that identified their role (and "character") or provided the character's name. Although this theater company did not announce a specific action or theme with signage, other public theater forms sometimes have placards placed on easels that announce scene changes and name the action portrayed in the upcoming portion of the play.

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[384] For information on this important aspect of El Movimiento, please see Ybarra-Frausto, "The Chicano Movement/The Movement of Chicano Art," 128-150. For a history of the theater from a feminist point of view, see Yolanda Broyles-González, *El Teatro Campesino: Theater in the Chicano Movement* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994).

Like supernumeraries at the opera that appear projected either at the top or bottom of the stage, the text in the fourth registers provide a "translation" for the events in the zones above and the encapsulated Spanish phrases in Register 2. Additionally, this register records the story, serves as the storyteller's voice, and scripts what the characters speak. As previously noted, Mesoamerican spiritual specialists used information recorded in ancient codices as cues for the oral improvisational retelling and reenactment of daily and other cyclical rituals. With this Mesoamerican precedent in mind, Montoya intended the visual representation of the codex's narrative to serve as a "prompt book" for oral performance by storytellers. Montoya has recently stated, "What you are looking at in this book is really Chicano theater, and what you are reading is the script."[385] Significantly, García-Camarillo staged *Codex Delilah* in Albuquerque, New Mexico, with actors and dancers. At the time of this performance, Montoya held teaching positions in Los Angeles and in Massachusetts and was unable to witness or participate in the three-dimensional realization of her work.[386]

I hope to have persuasively argued how *Codex Delilah* can be viewed as a place and object of performance. The dissertation has previously advanced the concept

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[385] Cook-Romero, "Wonder under the covers."
[386] Delilah Montoya, interview with the author, digital video and digital audio recording, Lockhart, Texas, 26 November 2003.

of Six-Deer's journey as rite of passage, initiatory ritual, and sacred and political pilgrimage. It has demonstrated how the journey produces: 1) a reconstruction of history from a mixed race and female point of view, 2) a lineage of female healers, and 3) a sacred worldview embodied by the codex itself and the various bodies it contains. This next section of the chapter links various ideas to create a theoretical model to discuss another aspect of what Six-Deer's journey produces, a construction of racial identity.

Kinesthesia and Inner Mimicry

In 1939, dance critic John Martin published his foundational text, *Introduction to the Dance*. He considered dance from the perspective of both theory and praxis, analyzing the evolution of dance through historical periods, and examined the difference between dance as popular expression and dance as a spectacle performed for the pleasure and edification of others. Martin assumed various points of view and analyzed dance from the stance of critic, audience, and dancer. He characterized this art form as one that used the body as a basic means of communication. Martin considered the body a tool and the "most eloquent and responsive of all instruments."[387] He noted that people dance, move, or gesture with their bodies when words are inadequate and, for Martin, this meant that dance "antedated" other forms of

[387] John Martin, *Introduction to the Dance* (Brooklyn: Dance Horizons, Incorporated, 1978), 14-15.

art.[388] Significantly, Martin also stressed the connection between dance and spiritual expression and dance as a means of communicating with the Divine.[389]

Martin felt that "modern man" had lost the capacity to understand movement as a means of communication and sought through his work to bring the ordinary layperson to a greater understanding of the dancer as artist and dance as a "substantial utterance such as credited to the other arts."[390] Further, he maintained that we no longer know how to look at dance, nor how to respond to it. In order to develop the larger public's appreciation of dance, Martin began his analysis with the movement of the human body, referring to it as "the very stuff of life."[391]

Martin maintained that human beings first react to their environment through their bodies and that our senses form the initial point of contact. While the daily impressions we receive from smells, sights, tastes, touches, and sounds provide us with critical information, he proposed that these sources of information paled in comparison to what we absorb from a "sixth sense." Martin termed this sixth sense as "movement sense," and stated that it derived primarily from the internal sensations of the body as a whole, rather than external world.[392] To explain movement sense, Martin stated that we have sense organs inside the very tissues and joints of our bodies that

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[388] Ibid., 13-14.
[389] Ibid., 16.
[390] Ibid., 22.
[391] Ibid., 31.
[392] Ibid., 43.

allow us to monitor and adjust to the ever-changing demands of our daily lives. Movement sense allows us to shift in response to new situations presented by our environment. Martin found a direct correlation between visual experience and kinesthetic experience, or the body's sensation or reaction to a particular event.

Martin defined his proposed sixth sense as our body's ability to house past physical experiences as a language. This language allows us to anticipate how to use our physical selves in the future. Although perhaps more developed in dancers and performers, each person possess this sixth sense and language. We amass this kinesthetic or movement language in two ways, either from past performances of specific actions or through observation of the movements of others. He used the example of a person encountering a heavy object that obstructs the person's path. Based on prior experience, we know how heavy the log will be and if we have the physical capacity to lift it. We rely on previous experiences and store this knowledge in the body. Therefore, our bodies draw upon kinesthetic language when making decisions and anticipating what actions to take. More importantly for this study, Martin states that the physical sense impressions that we amass daily over our lifetimes have corresponding "inseparable emotional connotations." He goes on to state that objects awaken feelings, both physical and emotional.[393]

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[393] Ibid., 47.

> We live in a constant stream of emotional reactions,
> Greeting every object, every situation, with favor or disfavor
> in varying degrees, reviving memories of previous experiences
> over the same neuromuscular paths, and making movements
> or preparations for movement according to the resultant of
> all these sources of testimony.[394]

Closely tied to Martin's notion of "movement sense" is his idea of "inner mimicry," defined as the bodily sensations we experience inside ourselves when we view the movements of others.[395] To explain inner mimicry, he used the example of a person watching someone carry a heavy burden. Martin suggested that, as we view this action, our bodies produce a "sympathetic motor response," an aching in our muscles in answer to their efforts. Our bodies "feel" along with other's bodies as they perform any kind of behavior from ordinary daily activities to heroic efforts. Thus, our bodies perform in sympathy with those that we watch or view.

In a further example, Martin observed that when people see someone sucking a lemon, they often experience a sensation in their mouth and throat, as if they actually physically tasted the sour fruit. He thought that the mouths of those witnessing the event would pucker in response to the sight alone, without having to actually eat the lemon. According to Martin, "We cease to be mere spectators and become participants

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[394] Ibid.
[395] Ibid.

in the movement that is presented to us…"[396] Following Martin, when we as spectators view the characters in *Codex Delilah*, our bodies may feel along with them, although we may appear still and quiet in the museum or gallery. Martin found that while these reactions do not show on the exterior of our body, studies have documented internal physical changes in muscular condition.[397]

When encountering a work of art, Martin notes that understanding its meaning involves a process of rationalization. Importantly, before we understand the work, we must first *experience* it.[398] Martin's ideas of "movement sense and "inner mimicry" may help us understand and experience the relationship between Six-Deer and the women she meets and perhaps between the characters in *Codex Delilah* and ourselves.

Frames of Mind **and Bodily Intelligence**

In the early 1980s, Howard Gardner assessed the existing standard view of the Intelligence Quotient (IQ) test as a means of measuring an individual's capacity to learn and urged for a more inclusive and expansive model. He challenged the education community to go beyond the ways intelligence had been perceived, measured, and fostered in the classroom. In *Frames of Mind,* he proposed a series of "intellectual competencies" as alternative categories for assessing an individual's skills

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[396] Ibid., 53.
[397] Ibid., 49.
[398] Ibid., 51.

and potential.[399] Gardiner felt that a "human intellectual competence" involved problem solving skills that allowed the person to either "resolve" specific "difficulties" and to produce a particular product in response. Additionally, this process had the "potential" for the creation of new knowledge, because, when wrestling with particular issues, new problems or new questions might be developed that would lead to novel insights and innovative paths of inquiry.[400] His proposed competencies included linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, and bodily-kinesthetic intelligences. I limit my remarks to his last competence, that of bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, or bodily intelligence, because it contributes the most to what this study argues in this chapter.

In order to define bodily intelligence, Gardner drew upon the work of dance theorist and critic John Martin's work regarding a sixth sense, the kinesthetic or "movement sense" just discussed. Gardner defined bodily intelligence as the ability to use one's body in a highly skilled manner for expressive or functional purposes. Not surprisingly, he posited that this intelligence finds its highest development in dancers, actors, and athletes.[401] He explored how those who use their body as a primary source of communication, such as mimes and other performers, developed and exploited this

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[399] Howard Gardner, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1983), 206.
[400] Ibid., 60-61.
[401] Ibid., 206.

intelligence. When speaking of Marcel Marceau, he noted that the world-renown mime could not only create recognizable human archetypes, such as bullies, but also natural phenomena, animals, and "abstract concepts" such as freedom, beauty, or evil.[402] In order to evoke these images in the spectator's mind, Marceau had to amplify both his movements and his reactions to imaginary people and objects. Similarly, Montoya portrayed the characters in *Codex Delilah* in particular poses at the height of their expression of a certain action or emotion. She controlled the composition of each panel and individual image and distilled what they communicated to a concentrated core component. As a result, the characters use their bodies, or, more correctly, Montoya uses their bodies in a "highly skilled manner for expressive purposes." Nowhere is this more evident than in Panel 2 of the artwork where Montoya pictures Llora in the midst of deep despair. The artist captures Llora in bodily movements that express grief with great abandon and cannot fail to move the spectator or evoke a sympathetic or empathetic response in the body of the viewer.

Gardner classified dance as a "mature form of bodily expression." He noted that dance is the most highly evolved of all bodily expressions and that cultures worldwide employ dance extensively for wide ranging purposes.[403] He recorded a vast number of ways people use dance as a means of communication including to

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[402] Ibid.
[403] Ibid., 222.

demonstrate and reinforce social order, to portray sacred and secular concerns, and as an athletic pursuit or a pastime. For this study, his most important observation is,

> Dance can serve an educational purpose, in an initiation rite, by acting out transformation through which an individual will eventually pass; it can be used to embody the super-natural, as when medicine men dance to invoke the spirits…"[404]

The "dance," or movements Six-Deer observes when Lupe heals her feet in Register 2 of Panel 3 serve as a form of initiation and a "teachable" moment. At this point in the journey, Six-Deer struggles to achieve her quest, to reach Aztlán, and to have her questions answered by Crow-Woman. Yet, the child is far from understanding the true purpose of her ordeals, not only is Six-Deer destined to follow in the healing traditions of her people, but, unbeknownst to her, she has been sent by Ix-Chel to save the world. When Lupe touches Six-Deer's body, she teaches the child how to cure illness and restore balance to the human body and spirit. Six-Deer learns these skills from observing Lupe's embodiment and performance of this healing ritual. The child stores this knowledge in her bodily memory and calls upon her embodied knowledge later in the codex. The performance of this healing ritual pre-dates Six-Deer's later carrying out a similar act of healing in Panel 7, when she begins a process of restoring Crow-Woman, hence the earth, to health and thereby, ensuring the future of humanity.

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[404] Ibid., 223.

Kinesthetic Empathy and "Felt" Knowledge

Dance ethnologist Deidre Sklar conducted field research of over two year's duration in the town of Las Cruces, New Mexico, and has written extensively on its annual celebration of the Virgin of Guadalupe in the Las Tortugas neighborhood.[405] The three-day fiesta begins December 10 and concludes on December 12, the Virgin of Guadalupe's feast day. Formal dance performances and a pilgrimage to the top of nearby Tortugas Mountain form central elements of the festival. I find Sklar's work particularly important for this study because the raced bodies she studied perform movement within the paradigm of a sacred pilgrimage and because she understands that "movement, especially in the context of ritual, embodies cultural knowledge." [406]

Sklar proposes "movement as a way of knowing," where meaning carried in the soma (body) is enacted and understood through movement.[407] According to Sklar, "The body itself is a process, one that organizes as it apprehends, and becomes what it organizes.[408] Following this line of thought, I suggest that through the journey Six-Deer undertakes, she becomes the sum total of what she "apprehends" or learns during her pilgrimage. As previously stated, Six-Deer and Ix-Chel symbolize and serve as archives of the bodies of knowledge and histories of their people and the collective

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[405] Deidre Sklar, *Dancing with the Virgin: Body and Faith in the Fiesta of Tortugas* (New Mexico and Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).
[406] Deidre Sklar, "On Dance Ethnography," *Dance Research Journal* 23:1 (Spring 1991): 7.
[407] Deidre Sklar, "Reprise: On Dance Ethnography," *Dance Research Journal* 32:1 (Summer 2000): 70.
[408] Ibid.: 74.

peoples of Mesoamerica. Each new encounter brings the child closer to an experience of spiritual power and into a deeper state of wisdom that allows the realization of her healing powers. Most importantly, Six-Deer not only contains these knowledges in her mind and memory, but holds them in the sinews of her body. She possesses embodied knowledge of healing, comprehends this information through movement -- her movements and those of others.

As I have discussed in earlier chapters of this dissertation, two important rituals of healing take place in *Codex Delilah*. In Panel 2, Six-Deer watches the proscribed movements of Lupe as the woman "caresses" her feet, thereby implicating the role of touch in curative rites. Steinman states that "Having done something once…we do not forget. The body has its secrets, and touch and movement are often the potent keys."[409] Lupe's touch encodes and embeds the experience and knowledge of healing in Six-Deer's body, knowledge she draws on later in Panel 7 of the codex. Six-Deer offers up and literally imprints her life force, her sacred fluid, her blood on the earth as she treks through mountainous terrain in the second panel. When she becomes someone "who knows" toward the end of her journey, Six-Deer understands that she must replenish the earth with Crow-Woman's blood in order to heal the old woman, the earth, and the cosmos. When Six-Deer watches Lupe's cultural and

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[409] Steinman, *The Knowing Body*, 21.

spiritual performance of restoration, she embodied this knowledge. She performs another "genealogy" of this rite when she heals Crow-Woman in the final panel of the work. The newly emerged healer activates this healing process when she embraces Crow-Woman and continues the touch given her by both Ix-Chel at the beginning of her quest and by Lupe in Panel 2.

A second line of Sklar's work builds upon Martin's initial formulation of kinesthesia when she uses "kinesthetic empathy" as a strategy for understanding and theorizing performances of everyday actions or ritualized movement, such as dance or cultural ceremonies.[410] Sklar describes "kinesthetic empathy" or "feeling with" as the ability to attend to one's own bodily and affective sensations and to sense and respond to those feelings in another's body. I think that Montoya's presentation of Six-Deer reveals that the child experiences this form of empathy, especially in Panels 2 and 6.

In Panel 2, Llora-Llora-Malinche's body performs a "dance" of lamentation and her body serves to mark the end of a particular period, not only in Six-Deer's life, but in the history of the Americas. Her body acts out the stages of grief from shock and disbelief, to anger and resignation. She performs the desperation of a bereaved mother and represents the sufferings and loss of mothers everywhere from time immemorial. Llora stands for both individual and collective mothers, such as those at

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[410] Sklar, "On Dance Ethnography," 8-9.

the Buenos Aires' Plaza de Mayo who demanded to know the fate of their "disappeared" children in public demonstrations every Thursday afternoon since the mid-1970s. The loss of Llora's children in her aspect as La Llorona, the loss of the children of the conquest, and the loss of Six-Deer's childhood innocence stand as a symbol for the loss of a future never to be realized, a future without conquest.

In Panel 6 of *Codex Delilah*, Montoya pictures Six-Deer clenching her fist in solidarity and clapping her hands together with a broad smile on her face. As she moves among crowds of protestors, Six-Deer performs a cultural ritual particular to historic marches and protests in support of farm workers. During these moments of communitas, marchers accompanied chants of "Si Se Puede" with rhythmic clapping. Various "genealogies" of this performed tradition circulated among communities throughout the United States.

Genealogies of Performance

In *Cities of the Dead,* Joseph Roach proposes "genealogies of performance" or performances passed from one generation to another that establish a lineage of cultural knowledge and practices through their physical embodiment and public re-enactment.[411] Roach's work investigates how performance embeds memories of specific moments and locations in the bodies of those who both enact and witness

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[411] Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, 25.

performances. Therefore, he implicates the body in the production, reclamation, and performance of these memories.[412] Roach claims that societies invent themselves by performing their pasts in the presence of others. Roach's concept of bodily transmission of histories and cultural knowledge can be easily understood through the example of dance, particularly culturally specific dances, such as *cumbia*, or classical ballet. In these forms, older and more practiced members of the community, family, parish, or performance group demonstrate specific gestures and sequences of movements that constitute the dance. Through endless repetition, children and young performers learn the "folk" (cultural dances) or classic ballet repertoire.

Chicana and Chicano bodies bear the consequences of history. Memories pass from generation to generation through oral transmission, the performance of both daily rituals of cooking, eating, working, praying, and the performance of life cycle ritual such as quinceañeras and cincuentañeras. Following Roach, these cultural rituals or performances impact the surface of the viewers' bodies and leave an impression or reflection of the enactment on, and I suggest in, the viewers' bodies. These performances, like those depicted in *Codex Delilah,* contest and counter dominant paradigms because they construct alternative histories and genealogies.

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[412] Ibid., 26.

***Codex Delilah*: "Performing La Mestiza," Performing La Chicana**

This section of the final chapter asserts *Codex Delilah* as a performance or an enactment of an imagined past housed in the bodies of its characters as designed by Delilah Montoya. I adopt the part of the title for this section from an earlier work by Ellen M. Gil-Gómez who analyzes the representations and constructions of identity of lesbians of color in literature.[413] I use a section of Gil-Gómez's title phrase to signal another important aspect of what the journey in *Codex Delilah* creates, the construction of Six-Deer's identity as mestiza and Chicana. In addition to the construction of women's historical roles fashioned by Montoya, her choice of subtitle, "Journey from Mexicatl to Chicana" makes clear that, as Six-Deer journeys from Palenque to Albuquerque, the child's understanding of her racial identity transforms during the different historical periods.

In *Codex Delilah,* Montoya creates a fictional character, Six-Deer, understood as the symbolic source of genesis for contemporary Chicanas/os. In the first panel, the artist begins her reconstruction of history in the Americas before European conquest with Six-Deer as a member of the Mexicatl, an imaginary indigenous group. The child initiates her quest for truth, harmony, and balance and travels ahead in time to the first point of contact between indigenous and European cultures. In the second panel of

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[413] Ellen M. Gil-Gómez, *Performing La Mestiza: Textural Representation of Lesbians of Color and the Negotiation of Identities* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 2000).

Codex Delilah, sexual transgression produces a new people – mestizas/os. According to Montoya and García-Camarillo's narrative, the bodies of Six-Deer and the conflated Llora bring mestizas/os into existence. While Montoya does not visually or textually represent Six-Deer's progeny in the codex, we can understand La-Velia as a contemporary manifestation of the lineage that symbolically begins with Six-Deer.

In the third panel, Six-Deer retains her indigenous identity although she initially believes that the "invaders" have destroyed both her gods and her way of life. When Lupe appears to the child, she explains the mixing of worlds, ideologies, and blood that has transpired. Lupe-Lupita's presence foregrounds the diversity of racial categories that emerge during the colonial period as exemplified in the *casta* system. As suggested by recent research, the discussion of the presence of Africans in Mexico during the colonial period and the resulting mestizaje is gaining increasing attention. Some scholars have asserted that more Africans came (or were forcibly brought) to the Americas than Spaniards.[414] Casta paintings have recorded the impact of this racial mixing, yet its acknowledgement remains in its initial stages among Chicana/o discussions of racial identity.[415] Montoya's visual narrative as illustrated by the body

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[414] Bobby Vaughn, "Race and Nation: A Study of Blackness in Mexico" (Doctoral Dissertation, Stanford University, 2001).

[415] Martha Menchaca, *Recovering History, Constructing Race: The Indian, Black, and White Roots of Mexican Americans* (Austin: University of Texas, 2001), Magali Marie Carrera, *Imagining Identity in New Spain: Race, Lineage, and the Colonial Body in Portraiture and Casta Paintings* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), Ilona Katzew, *Casta Painting; Images of Race in Eighteenth-Century*

of Six-Deer does not specifically address African presence, instead Montoya emphasizes indigenous heritage when Lupe tells Six-Deer that the "umbilical cord of Indian life has not been severed" and encourages her with the words, "Whatever happens, don't forget your Indian roots, your devotion to harmony and your healing powers."

In the fourth panel, Montoya directly confronts another result of Spanish presence in the Americas when she uses the figure of Adora-La-Conquistadora to represent the pride that "pure-blood" Hispanas/os exhibit because they trace their lineage directly to Spain. The conflict that Six-Deer and Adora experience results from the denigration of most things indigenous and the elevation of most things *Español*, an aspect of contemporary life in New Mexico where the incremental rankings of preferred "racial stock" inherited from the colonial period still hold some power today. Although Montoya does not account for the mixing of Native Americans, Spanish, and indigenous Mexicans in *Codex Delilah*, she points to these issues in her treatment of Adora. Enrique LaMadrid explains the complex layers of New Mexican history and race relations that resulted from the Reconquest of 1692 and accounts for another important aspect of the racial make-up of some contemporary Chicanas/os.

Mexico (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004). Donna Morales and John P. Schmal have traced the genealogical history of the Morales family over a four hundred year period and established an existing African ancestry. Please see Donna Morales and John P. Schmal, "Slavery in Colonial Mexico," in *The Indigenous Roots of a Mexican-American Family* (Bowie: Heritage Books, 2003), 125-133.

Initially enemies, the Pueblans and the Spanish "settlers" banded together in mutual defense after the Reconquest when they experienced increasing attacks from native non-Pueblan groups, such as the Ute, Navajo, Comanche, and Apache peoples. Because of this conflict, the resulting

> "orphans, captives, and slaves, became known as *genízaros*, an emerging class of detribalized Indians. As *criados*, or servants, raised in the intimacy of Spanish households, they became more thoroughly Hispanicized than the Pueblos… Pueblo Indians were allies and trusted neighbors, but a genízaro with Comanche, Navajo, or Apache roots lived under the same roof, taking care of the children and singing them Native lullabies.[416]

In the fifth panel, Six-Deer meets Montoya's version of La Adelita, the woman soldier from the Mexican Revolutionary period. The artist does not illustrate the "creation" of the "Mexican-American" in her codex that resulted from the signing of the treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo in 1848. Instead, we understand Lucha as *Mexicana* (Mexican woman) who fluidly crosses the border. When she helps Six-Deer move from one shore to the other, Six-Deer transforms from an indigenous Mexican girl to a Mexican-American. In the sixth panel, La-Velia "interpellates" Six-Deer and calls her new identity into being.[417] Six-Deer approaches La-Velia and says

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[416] Enrique LaMadrid, "Luz y Sombra: The Poetics of Mestizo Identity," in *Nuevo México Profundo: Rituals of an Indo-Hispano Homeland* (Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press and the National Hispanic Cultural Center of New Mexico, 2000), 9.
[417] Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, ed. Louis Althusser (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970).

> "I'm on a journey trying to understand truth. You're dark like me. Are you an Indian?" Six-Deer asks touching La-Velia's arm." I guess I am," La-Velia answers, "but we call ourselves Chicanos." "Chicanos," Six-Deer pronounces the word haltingly. "I've never heard of Chicanos before."

Six-Deer's construction of identity is now complete, she has transformed from Mexican-American to a politicized Chicana.

Conclusion

The artworks produced for the exhibition "The Chicano Codices: En*counter*ing Art of the Americas" collected, circulated, and preserved Chicana and Chicano cultural capital. They simultaneously documented the effects of European occupation, celebrated existing pre-contact America civilizations, and demonstrated the ancient American artistic, spiritual, and cultural heritage inherited by contemporary Chicanas and Chicanos. By introducing these works into the public record, the exhibit contested the exclusion and elision of the cultures and histories of those inhabiting the Americas at First Contact from many canons of history and art history. The use, adaptation and development of the pre-Columbian codex form by today's Chicana/o artists represents a legacy from the call for self-determination of El Movimiento, the movement for the civil rights of Chicanos that emerged during the mid-60s, affirmed indigenous identity, and mandated increased representation of Chicana/o life and culture. The resulting decades have produced a continuing interest in indigenous identity as a source for

artistic inspiration and have witnessed an ongoing evolution of the artistic forms and styles taken from pre-Conquest manuscripts. Modern (or post-modern) Chicana/o codex makers have forged timely projects based not only on the styles of the pre-Conquest codices, but also on their content, capturing the intent and spirit of the original forms. These artists have created a contemporary art form that establishes its enduring importance as an expression of cultural identity and indigenous pride and that honors ancestral lives, celebrates the present, and envisions new possibilities for the future.

On Friday, October 16, 1992, San Francisco *Examiner* art critic David Bonetti made an important observation.

> "If the Mexican Museum succeeds in reinvigorating a long-suppressed medium, it will be accomplishing a rare historical recuperation. The test will be whether artists use the pre-Columbian codices as models independently of a promised museum exhibition with accompanying catalog."[418]

I agree with Bonetti that a central question raised by the exhibition was Sanchez-Tranquilino's recuperation and attempted rejuvenation of the American artistic inheritance represented by the Mesoamerican codex form. I demonstrated some of the ways Chicana and Chicano artists refer to the subject matter, styles, and symbols of the codex form both within and beyond the 1992 show at The Mexican Museum. More

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[418] David Bonetti, "Art of the Americas: Chicano culture, politics overlap at Mexican exhibit," *San Francisco Examiner,* October 16, 1992.

references exist within Chicana/o art. While the codex form as used by today's Chicana/o artists may not be again concentrated into a single exhibit that recognizes its cultural and artistic inheritance in such a direct route as that traced by "The Chicano Codices," certainly interest in and ongoing use of these models thrives and endures in present-day projects of Chicana/o artists.

In *Codex Delilah,* Montoya adopted the format and symbols from various pre-Columbian codices to imagine and construct a history of the conquest and its effects using the voices and experiences of mestizas*,* a perspective largely absent from artistic representation of these histories before 1992. Montoya's materials and methods of production echoed the re-construction of the re-membered histories and traditions illustrated in the artwork. She re-assembled the "bodies of knowledge" torn apart by the Conquest by piecing the codex together with photographic inserts, transferred images appropriated from extant Mesoamerican pre and post-Contact codices, and scraps of torn paper attached to the work's surface. In *Codex Delilah*, Montoya united both artistic practice and artistic concept*.* Building on stylistic elements of the pre-Conquest codices, Montoya constructed alternate representations of the often ignored or exoticized Indígena/Mexicana/Chicana body. The artist portrayed the negotiations of role and identity that Chicanas have made throughout the post-conquest period and went beyond a mere acknowledgment of this tragic loss to create a tale of physical hardship and spiritual healing that positioned a young Chicana as the central speaker

and actor in the artwork. The new bodies of knowledge created by Montoya produced alternate cultural models and a powerful heroine that honors and carries the indigenous past into the future.

Viewing *Codex Delilah* through a range of optics including formal organization, symbol, narrative, the body, and the sacred, this work introduced many areas of investigation pertinent to the study and interpretation of this artwork. Creating a mythic tale that resonates on multiple levels, Montoya's work reflects a critical moment in the history of contemporary art of the Americas, a moment when multiple contesting claims to lands and histories emerged in sharp focus. The artist consciously represented symbols, characters, and sites from a variety of geographic locations and cultures throughout the Americas as a means of honoring mestiza/o and indigenous identity. However, the work goes beyond a mere recognition and honoring of ancestors and heritage to re-imagine, re-member, and reconstruct the often divided and ruptured histories shared by people of indigenous heritage in the Americas. The creation of this codex contested the erasure and neglect of the histories of women in the Americas, affirmed the mixed racial heritage of contemporary Chicanas and Chicanos, and provided a site for the construction of new identities and histories. Perhaps most importantly, the work demonstrated a powerful recognition of the intimate connection between women and place, of women as social actors, and of women as healers not only of the earth but also of our people(s), our culture(s), and

ourselves.

This study traced the development and ongoing use of the codex form within Chicana/o art and then situated *Codex Delilah* and contemporary Chicana/o codices within both the larger frameworks of Chicana/o art and the genre of American artists books. I argued for the recognition of codices produced by contemporary Chicana/o artists as a genre of artwork that exists under the larger umbrella of artists books, while retaining and continuing the artistic influence and inheritance of Mesoamerican art traditions. Then the work braided together the theoretical constructions of Nepantla and mestiza consciousness articulated by Gloria Anzaldúa with previous understandings of liminality and rites of passage by Arnold Van Gennep and Victor Turner. I used Anzaldúa's notion of Nepantleras, or those people or entities that assist us during transitions, to analyze the characters Six-Deer encountered on her journey. Next, this dissertation demonstrated that the journey taken by Six-Deer performed multiple functions and generated additional meaning. The journey documented the important roles and contributions of Indígenas, Chicanas, Mexicanas, Mestizas, and Hispanas to history, constructed a racial identity with Six-Deer as symbolic genesis, created a genealogy of female healers, and asserted Six-Deer as a female savior and figure of redemption. Through an analysis of the codex's characters, I detailed the construction of the sacred as envisioned by Delilah Montoya and articulated her

contribution to the "contemporary visual language of the spiritual."[419]

The study positioned the codex as a body that contained bodies of knowledge passed from generation to generation through oral transmission. I analyzed how the human bodies of Montoya's characters, bodies of land and water, bodies of animals, and bodies of text, preserved and expressed sacred knowledge and a worldview that honored connection rather than separation. This worldview considered the human being as an integral unit of mind, body, and spirit and understood people as intimately connected to each other, the larger community, and to the earth. I showed how the bodies of characters in the codex held the memory of a people's stories, their sacred knowledge, and their everyday spiritual and cultural practices. After exploring the codex as body, I posited the codex as object and place of performance. Then, I interrogated the performance and performativity of raced and female bodies represented in the codex as part of the construction of identity formed by Six-Deer's journey.

Montoya used the codex form as a vehicle to reconstruct, remember, and reclaim the past. While acknowledging the losses and negotiations Chicanas and Chicanos have made throughout the post-conquest period and still make today in the de-colonial and post-colonial periods, Montoya moves on and through these

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[419] Mesa-Bains, "Imáges e Historias," 8.

impediments to create a gendered history that redeems the past while celebrating Chicanas' contributions to this story. Additionally, Montoya's codex portrayed a mode of mentorship between women imperative for contemporary society. Therefore, her work reinstates the past, empowers the present, and provides hope for future generations.

I undertook this project in the hope that it would promote increased recognition of the importance of Chicana and Chicano artists within the canon(s) of art history and encourage more scholarship on *Codex Delilah*, the art production of Delilah Montoya, and the ongoing project of decoloniality. The dissertation modeled the use of interdisciplinary strategies as a means of analyzing visual culture and invites further exploration in this regard. Following the steps of dance ethnologist Deidre Sklar and the imperative of Dick Higgins, I argue that art historians must consider our kinesthetic response when engaging with art and begin to develop theories and methods that allow us to approach art objects from an experiential point of view. I suggest that after standing outside the picture plane and constructing our "objective" formal, iconographic, and contextual analyses, we bring our bodies "into" the picture. Through attending to our bodily sensations, we can expand our ability to theorize the intention, interpretation, and reception of works of art. This trans-disciplinary approach provides us rich resources from which to loosen the canon, discipline, and field of art history from its current moorings and reframe it within an expanded and more inclusive paradigm.

Figures

Figure 1.1
Diego Muñoz Camargo, compiler, *Tlaxcala Codex,* Folio 13, 1584-85

Figure 1.2
Maya polychrome ceramic dish, Late Classic Period, 600-900 CE

Figure 1.3
Maya polychrome ceramic vase, Late Classic Period, 600-900 CE

Figure 1.4
Delilah Montoya, *Codex Delilah, Six-Deer: Journey from Mexicatl to Chicana,*
1992, Gouache on amate paper, Mixed media, 20 x 80 x 13 3/4 in.,
Copyright Delilah Montoya

Figure 1.5
Santa Contreras Barraza, *Una Vida Continua,* 1984,
Mixed media artist's book, 10 x 40 in.

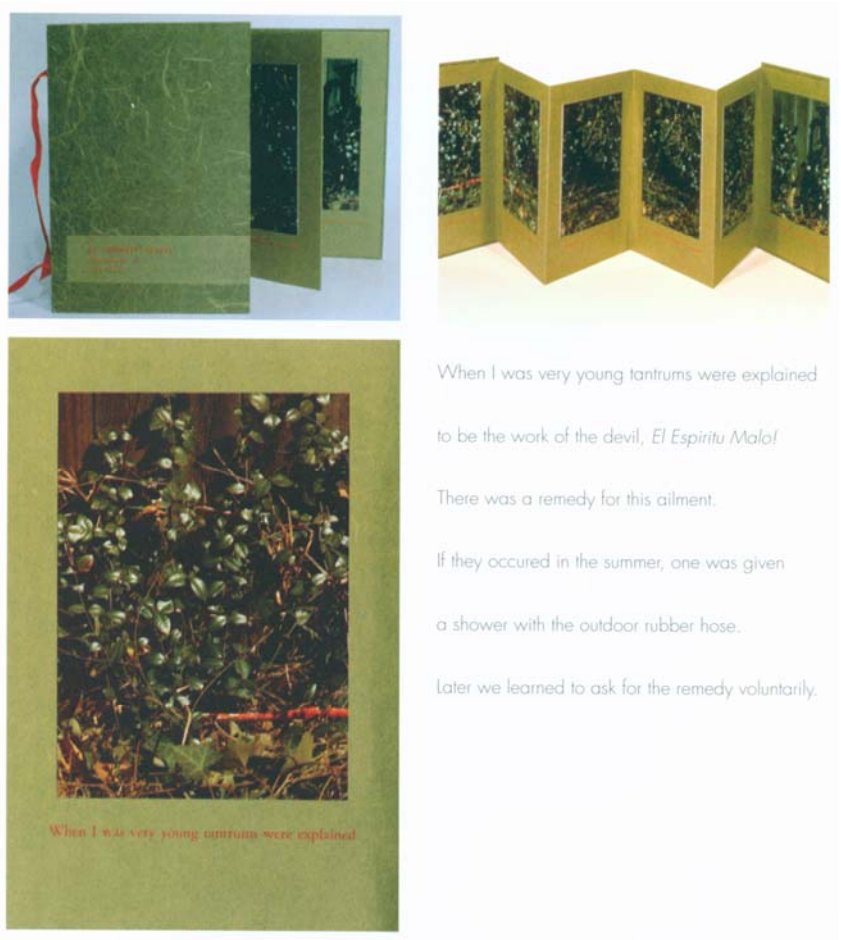

Figure 1.6
Celia Álvarez Muñoz, *Enlightenment #6: El Espiritu Malo*, 1982-1983,
Mixed media, Green accordion book with six 10 1/4 x 7 in. pages

Figure 1.7
Enrique Chagoya, detail from *Tales from the Conquest—Codex II*, 1992,
Mixed media on handmade paper, 15 x 70 in., Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Figure 1.8
Emmanuel Catarino Montoya, *Codex Catarino, Reclaiming Language and Culture,* 1992, Prismacolor on paper, Mixed media, 40 1/4 in. diameter

Figure 1.9
Carmen Lomas Garza, *Codex Lomas Garza: Pedacito de mi Corazón,*
1992, gouache and watercolor on paper, 15 1/2 x 75 x 10 in.

Figure 1.10
Patricia Rodríguez, *Codex Rayos: Relampagos*, 1992, Mixed media, 30 x 47 x 12 in.

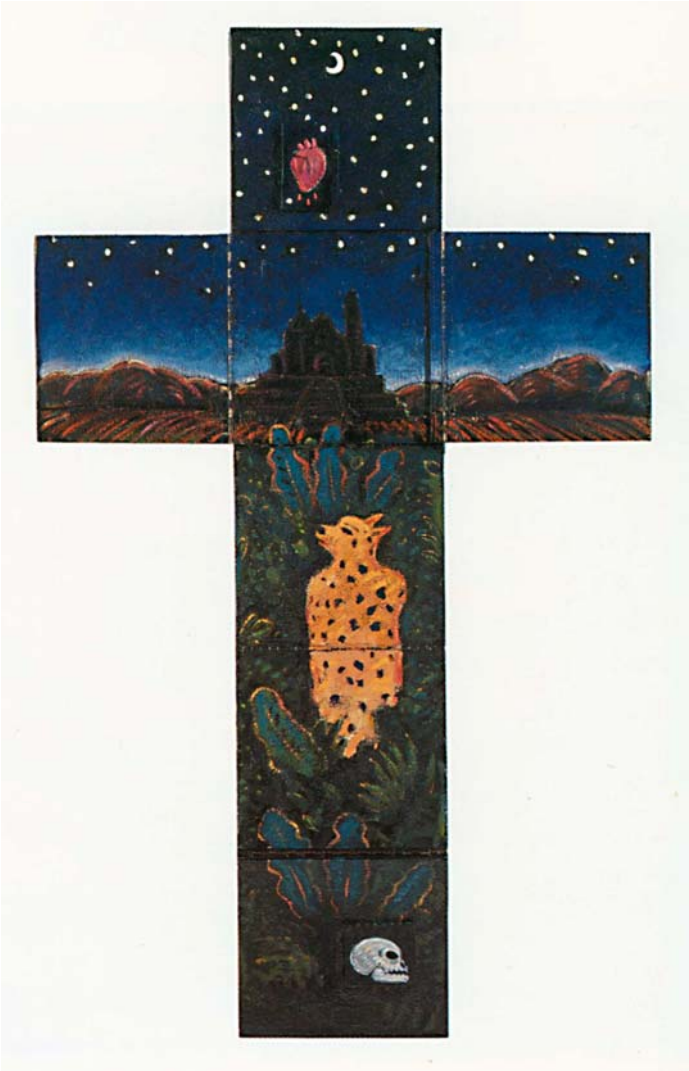

Figure 1.11
Carlos Frésquez, *Codex Frésquez: Imagine There's Nothing to Live or Die For; No Religions Too*…, 1992, Acrylic on wood, 59 x 35 1/2 x 1 1/2 in.

Figure 2.1
Delilah Montoya, *Codex #2 Delilah, Six-Deer: A Journey from Mechica to Chicana*,
Panel 3, 1992, Gouache on amate paper, Mixed media,
20 x 80 x 13 3/4 in., Copyright Delilah Montoya

Figure 2.2
Delilah Montoya, *Codex #2 Delilah, Six Deer, A Journey from Mechica to Chicana*, 1992, Gouache on amate paper, Mixed media, 20 x 80 x 13 3/4 in.,

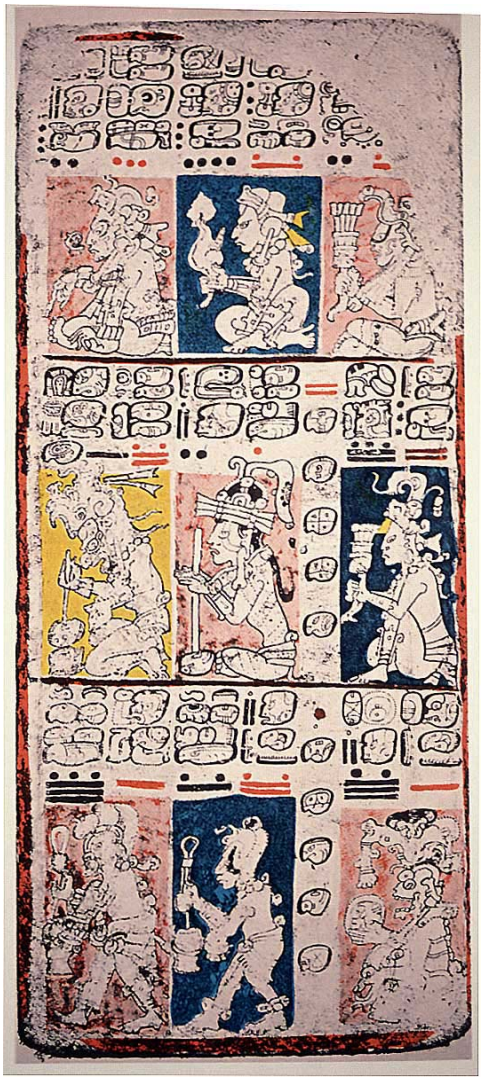

Figure 2.3
Dresden Codex, Plate 6

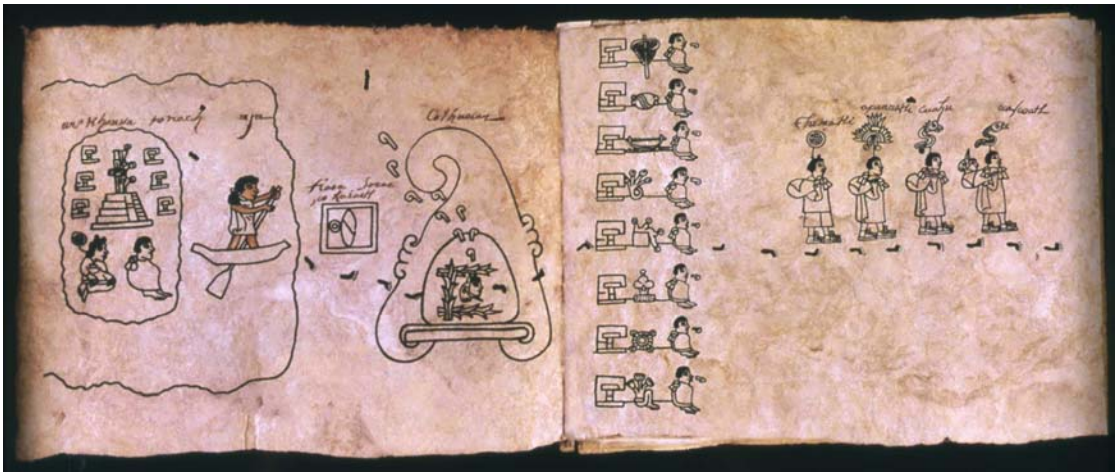

Figure 2.4
Codex Boturini, Folios 1 and 2, Facsimile of 16th century original,
Produced by *Taller de Artes Graficas,* Mexico City, 1991,
Amate paper and ink, 8 x 192 1/2 in.

Figure 2.5
Delilah Montoya, *Codex Delilah: Six Deer, Journey from Mexicatl to Chicana*,
Detail of Panel 2, Register 1, 1992, Gouache on amate paper, Mixed media,
20 x 80 x 13 3/4 in., Copyright Ann Marie Leimer

Figure 2.6
Delilah Montoya, *Codex Delilah: Six Deer, Journey from Mexicatl to Chicana*,
Detail of Panel 2, Register 2, 1992, Gouache on amate paper, Mixed media,
20 x 80 x 13 3/4 in., Copyright Ann Marie Leimer

Figure 2.7
Delilah Montoya, *Codex Delilah: Six Deer, Journey from Mexicatl to Chicana*,
Detail of Panel 2, Register 3, 1992, Gouache on amate paper, Mixed media,
20 x 80 x 13 3/4 in., Copyright Ann Marie Leimer

Figure 2.8
Delilah Montoya, *Codex Delilah, Six Deer, Journey from Mexicatl to Chicana*, Detail of Panel 2, Register 4, 1992, Gouache on amate paper, Mixed media, 20 x 80 x 13 3/4 in., Copyright Ann Marie Leimer

Figure 2.9
Delilah Montoya, *Codex Delilah, Six Deer, Journey from Mexicatl to Chicana*, Detail of Panel 1, Register 1, 1992, Gouache on amate paper, Mixed media, 20 x 80 x 13 3/4 in., Copyright Ann Marie Leimer

Figure 2.10
Delilah Montoya, *Codex Delilah, Six Deer, Journey from Mexicatl to Chicana*, Detail of Panel 1, Register 2, 1992, Gouache on amate paper, Mixed media, 20 x 80 x 13 3/4 in., Copyright Ann Marie Leimer

Figure 2.11
Codex Nuttall, Detail of Plate 43

Figure 2.12
Codex Nuttall, Plate 43

Figure 2.13
Delilah Montoya, *Codex Delilah, Six Deer, Journey from Mexicatl to Chicana*, Detail of Panel 1, Register 2, 1992, Gouache on amate paper, Mixed media, 20 x 80 x 13 3/4 in., Copyright Ann Marie Leimer

Figure 2.14
Delilah Montoya, *Codex Delilah, Six Deer, Journey from Mexicatl to Chicana*, Detail of Panel 2, Register 2, 1992, Gouache on amate paper, Mixed media, 20 x 80 x 13 3/4 in., Copyright Ann Marie Leimer

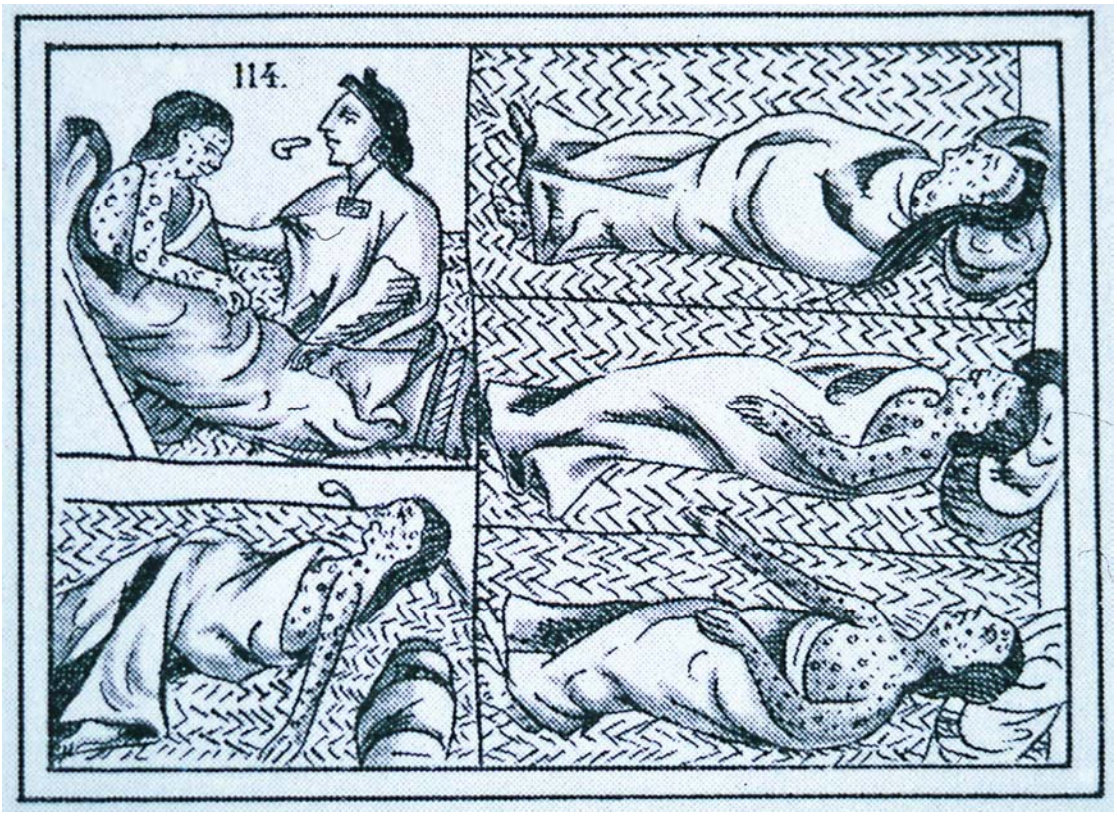

Figure 2.15
Florentine Codex, Plate 114

Figure 2.16
Delilah Montoya, *Codex Delilah, Six Deer, Journey from Mexicatl to Chicana*, Detail of Panel 2, Register 2, 1992, Gouache on amate paper, Mixed media, 20 x 80 x 13 3/4 in., Copyright Ann Marie Leimer

Figure 2.17
Delilah Montoya, *Codex Delilah, Six Deer, Journey from Mexicatl to Chicana*, Detail of Panel 2, Register 2, 1992, Gouache on amate paper, Mixed media, 20 x 80 x 13 3/4 in., Copyright Ann Marie Leimer

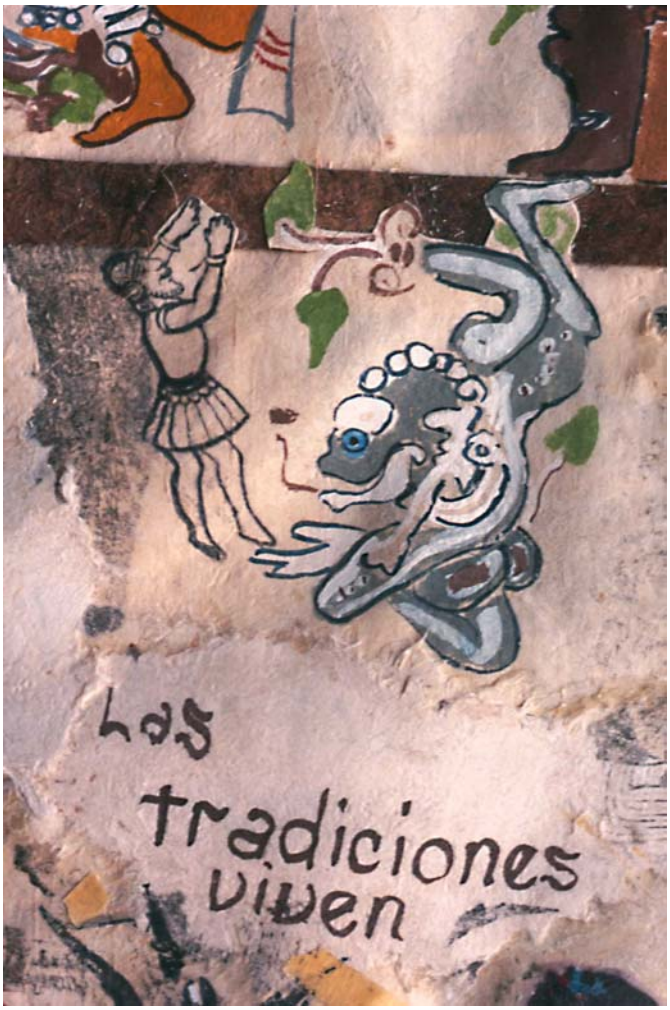

Figure 2.18
Delilah Montoya, *Codex Delilah, Six Deer, Journey from Mexicatl to Chicana*, Detail of Panel 3, Registers 1 and 2, 1992, Gouache on amate paper, Mixed media, 20 x 80 x 13 3/4 in., Copyright Ann Marie Leimer

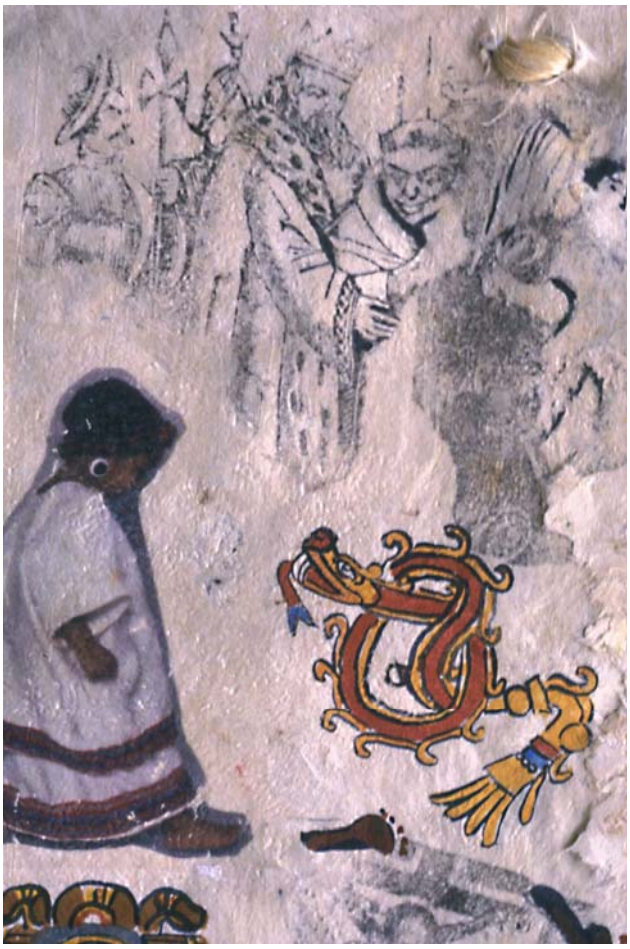

Figure 2.19
Delilah Montoya, *Codex Delilah, Six Deer, Journey from Mexicatl to Chicana*, Detail of Panel 3, Register 2, 1992, Gouache on amate paper, Mixed media, 20 x 80 x 13 3/4 in., Copyright Ann Marie Leimer

Figure 2.20
Delilah Montoya, *Codex Delilah, Six Deer, Journey from Mexicatl to Chicana*, Detail of Panel 3, Register 2, 1992, Gouache on amate paper, Mixed media, 20 x 80 x 13 3/4 in., Copyright Ann Marie Leimer

Figure 2.21
Delilah Montoya, *Codex Delilah, Six-Deer: Journey from Mexicatl to Chicana,*
1992, Detail from Panel 4, Registers 1 and 2, Gouache on amate paper,
Mixed media, 20 x 80 x 13 3/4 in., Copyright Ann Marie Leimer

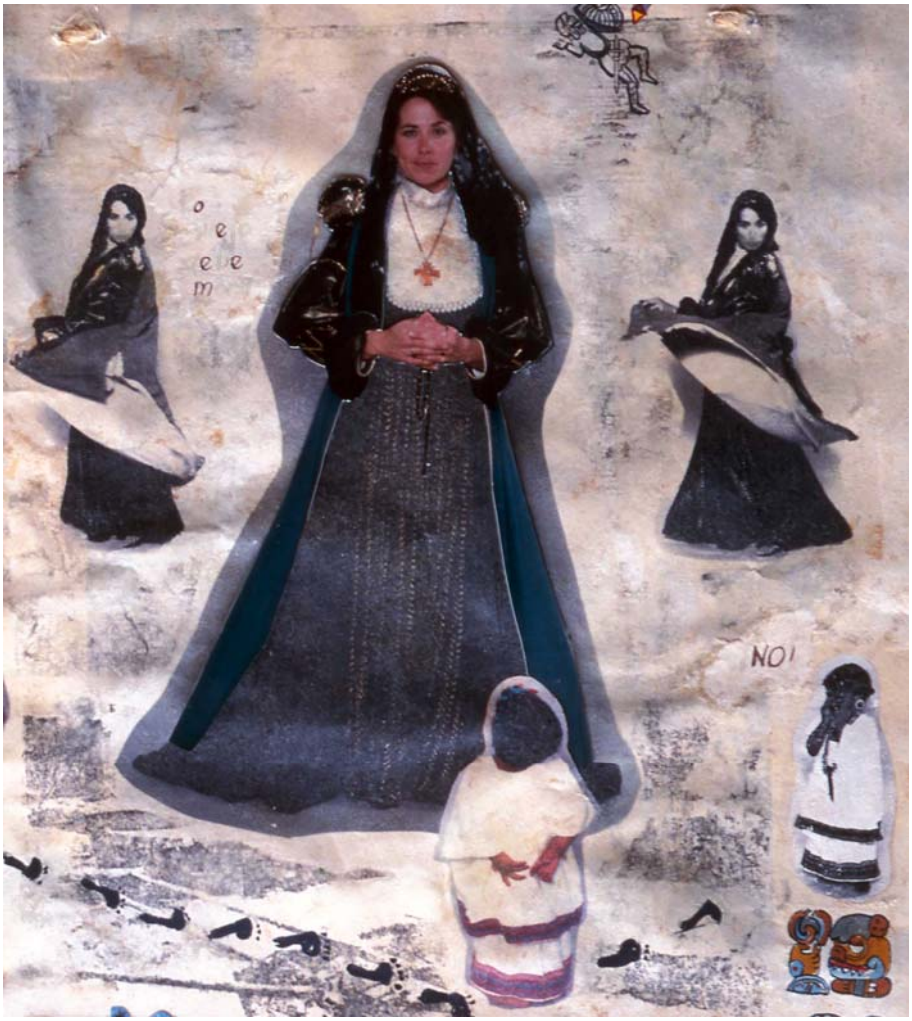

Figure 2.22
Delilah Montoya, *Codex Delilah, Six Deer, Journey from Mexicatl to Chicana*, Detail of Panel 4, Register 2, 1992, Gouache on amate paper, Mixed media, 20 x 80 x 13 3/4 in., Copyright Ann Marie Leimer

Figure 2.23
Delilah Montoya, *Codex Delilah, Six Deer, Journey from Mexicatl to Chicana*, Detail of Panel 5, Register 2, 1992, Gouache on amate paper, Mixed media, 20 x 80 x 13 3/4 in., Copyright Ann Marie Leimer

Figure 2.24
Delilah Montoya, *Codex Delilah, Six Deer, Journey from Mexicatl to Chicana*, Detail of Panel 5, Register 2, 1992, Gouache on amate paper, Mixed media, 20 x 80 x 13 3/4 in., Copyright Ann Marie Leimer

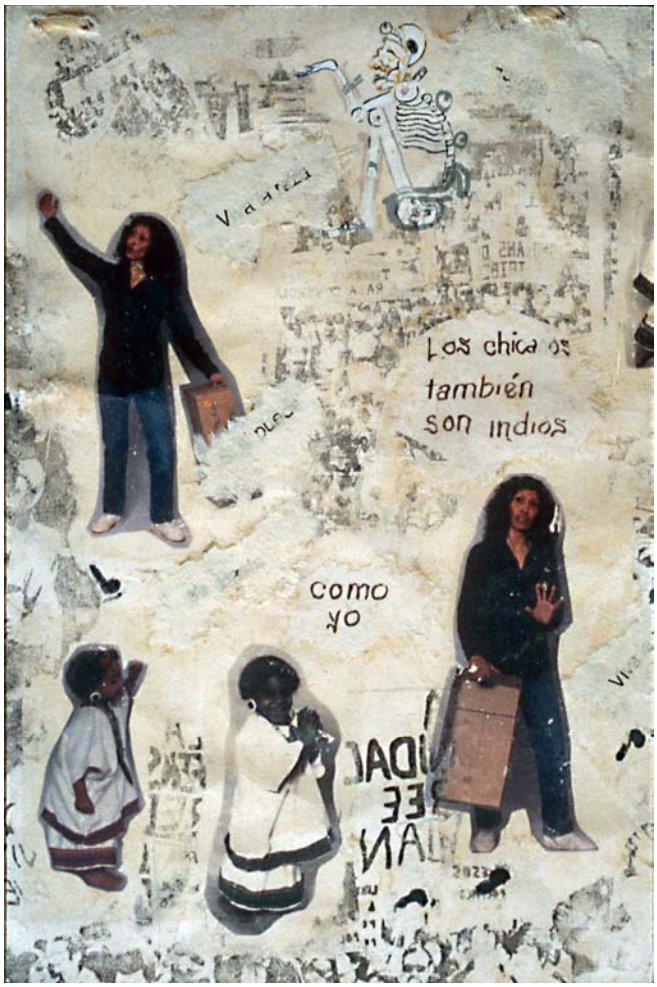

Figure 2.25
Delilah Montoya, *Codex Delilah, Six Deer, Journey from Mexicatl to Chicana*, Detail of Panel 6, Register 2, 1992, Gouache on amate paper, Mixed media, 20 x 80 x 13 3/4 in., Copyright Ann Marie Leimer

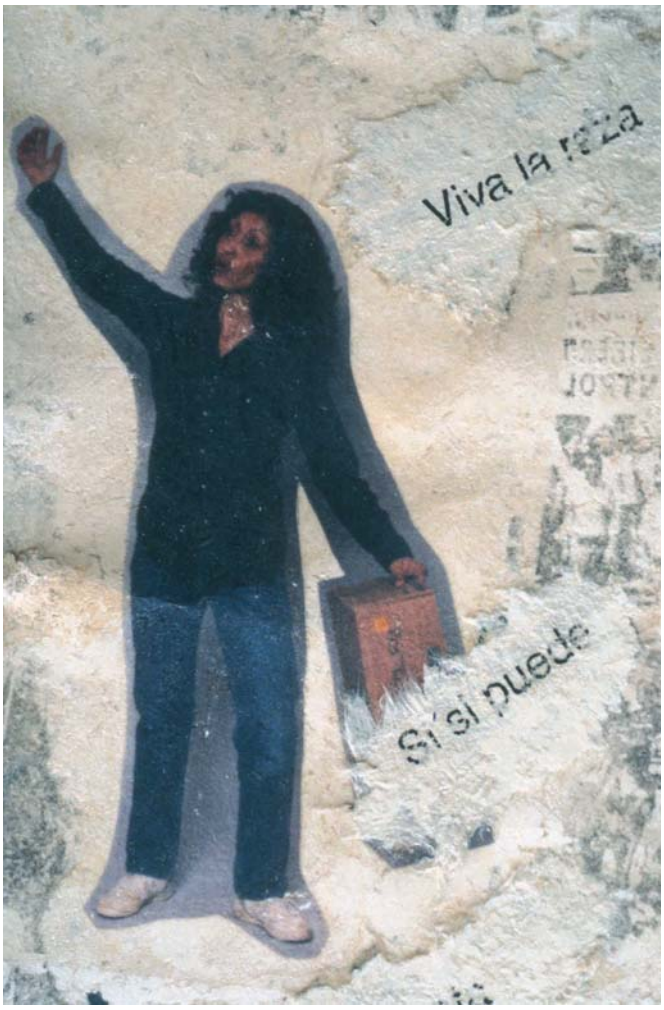

Figure 2.26
Delilah Montoya, *Six Deer, Journey from Mexicatl to Chicana*,
Detail of Panel 6, Register 2, 1992, Gouache on amate paper, Mixed media,
20 x 80 x 13 3/4 in., Copyright Ann Marie Leimer

Figure 2.27
Delilah Montoya, *Codex Delilah, Six Deer, Journey from Mexicatl to Chicana*, Detail of Panel 6, Register 2, 1992, Gouache on amate paper, Mixed media, 20 x 80 x 13 3/4 in., Copyright Ann Marie Leimer

Figure 2.28
Delilah Montoya, *Codex Delilah, Six Deer, Journey from Mexicatl to Chicana*, Detail of Panel 7, Register 2, 1992, Gouache on amate paper, Mixed media, 20 x 80 x 13 3/4 in., Copyright Ann Marie Leimer

Figure 2.29
Delilah Montoya, *Codex Delilah, Six Deer, Journey from Mexicatl to Chicana*, Detail of Panel 7, Register 2, 1992, Gouache on amate paper, Mixed media, 20 x 80 x 13 3/4 in., Copyright Ann Marie Leimer

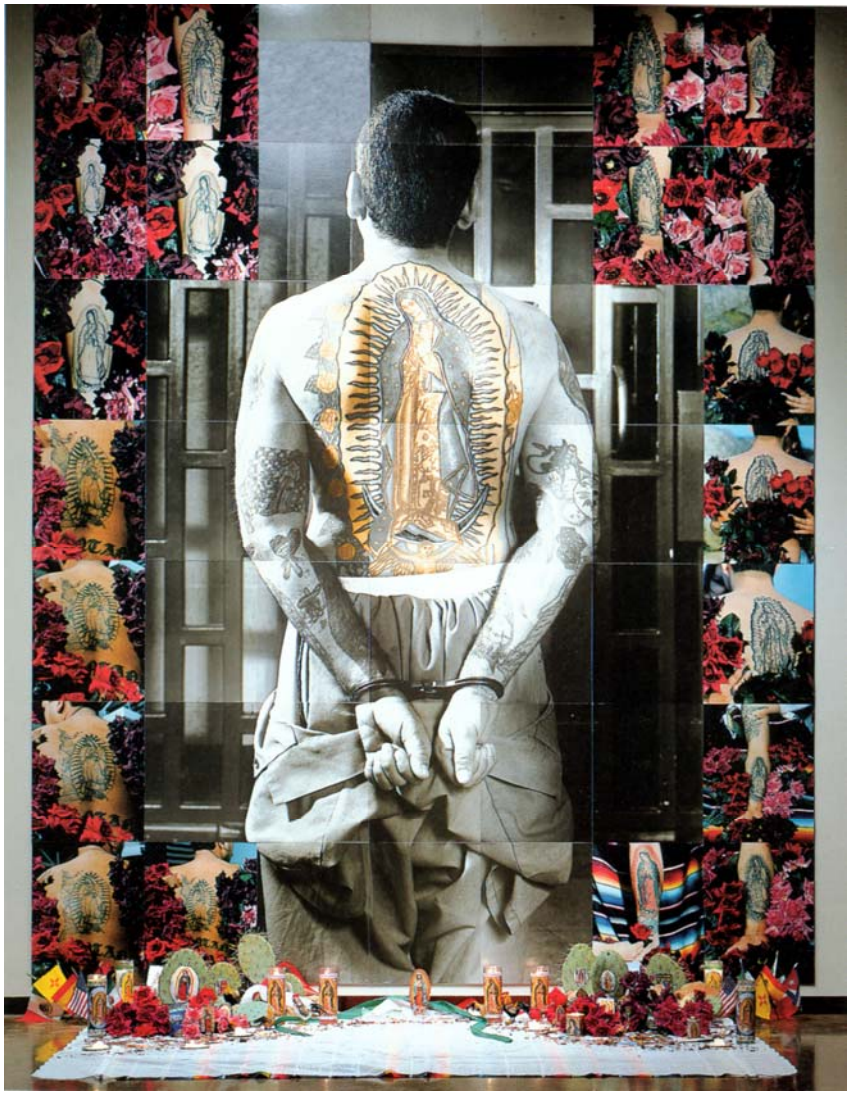

Figure 2.30
Delilah Montoya, *The Guadalupano*, 1998,
Photo mural, 14 x 10 x 10 ft.

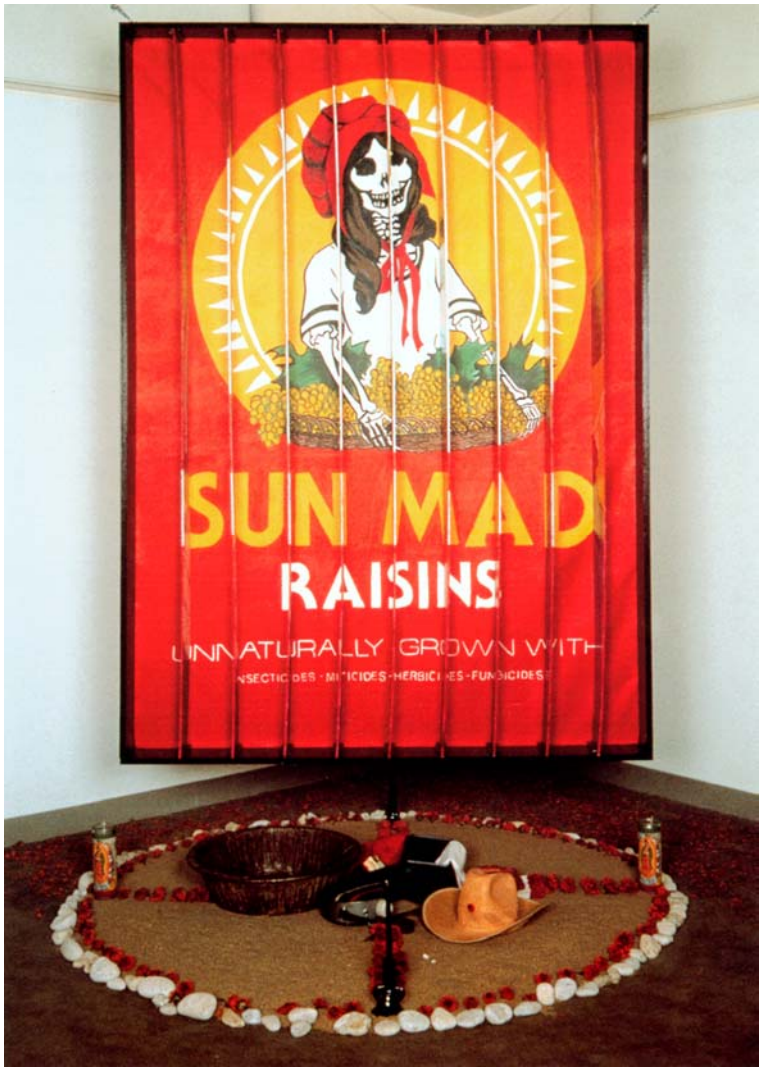

Figure 2.31
Ester Hernández, *Installation – Day of the Dead*, 1989,
Mixed media, 10 x 6 x 10 ft.

Figure 2.32
Ester Hernández, *Installation – Day of the Dead*, 1989,
Mixed media, 10 x 6 x 10 ft.

Figure 3.1
Delilah Montoya, *Codex Delilah, Six Deer, Journey from Mexicatl to Chicana*, Detail of Panel 1, Register 2, 1992, Gouache on amate paper, Mixed media, 20 x 80 x 13 3/4 in., Copyright Ann Marie Leimer

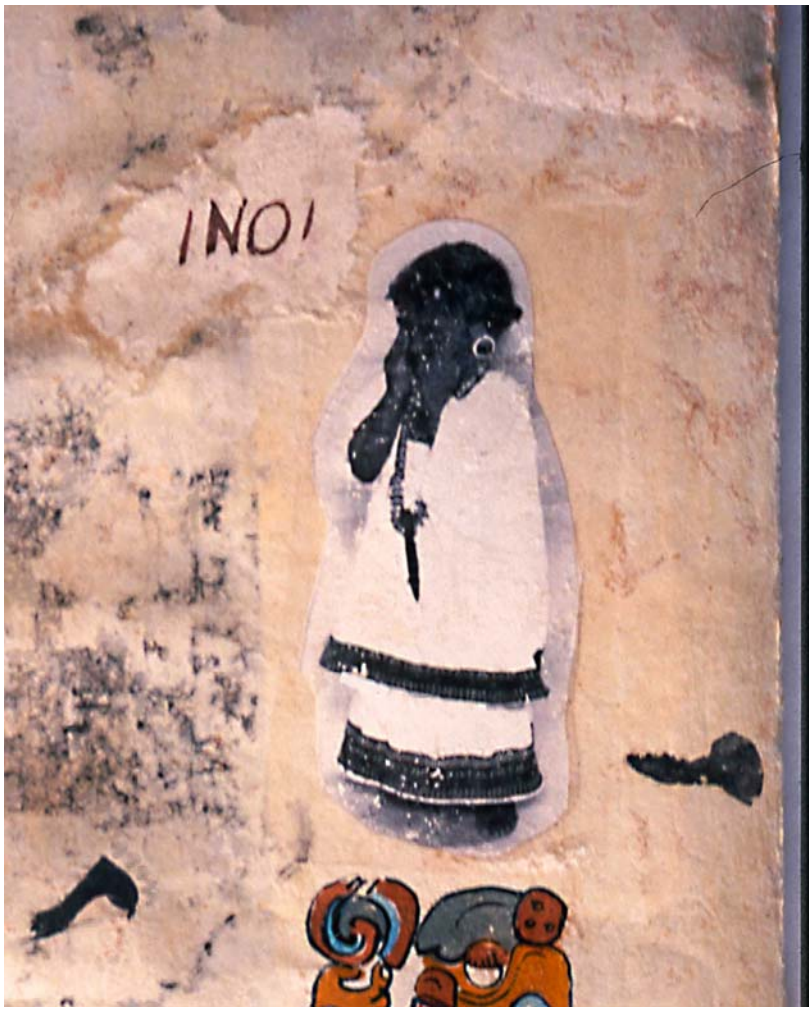

Figure 3.2
Delilah Montoya, *Six Deer, Journey from Mexicatl to Chicana*,
Detail of Panel 4, Register 2, 1992, Gouache on amate paper, Mixed media,
20 x 80 x 13 3/4 in., Copyright Ann Marie Leimer

Figure 3.3
Ann Marie Leimer, *La Conquistadora*,
Outdoor shrine at with handmade crosses at the top, Chimayó, New Mexico, 2004,
Digital photograph

Figure 4.1
Helen Cordero, *The First Storyteller*, 1964, Collection of the Museum on International Folk Art, Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 8 in. high

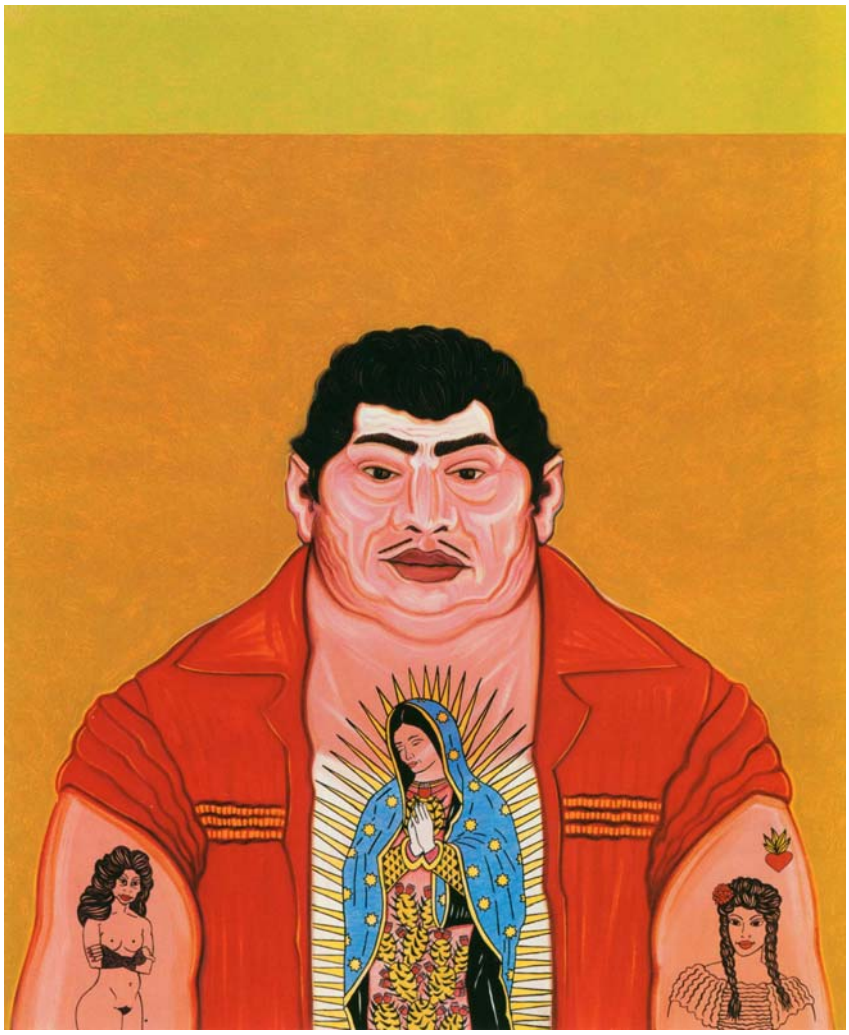

Figure 4.2
César Martínez, *Hombre que le Gustan las Mujeres (The Man Who Loves Women)*, 2000, Oil on canvas, 44 x 54 in.

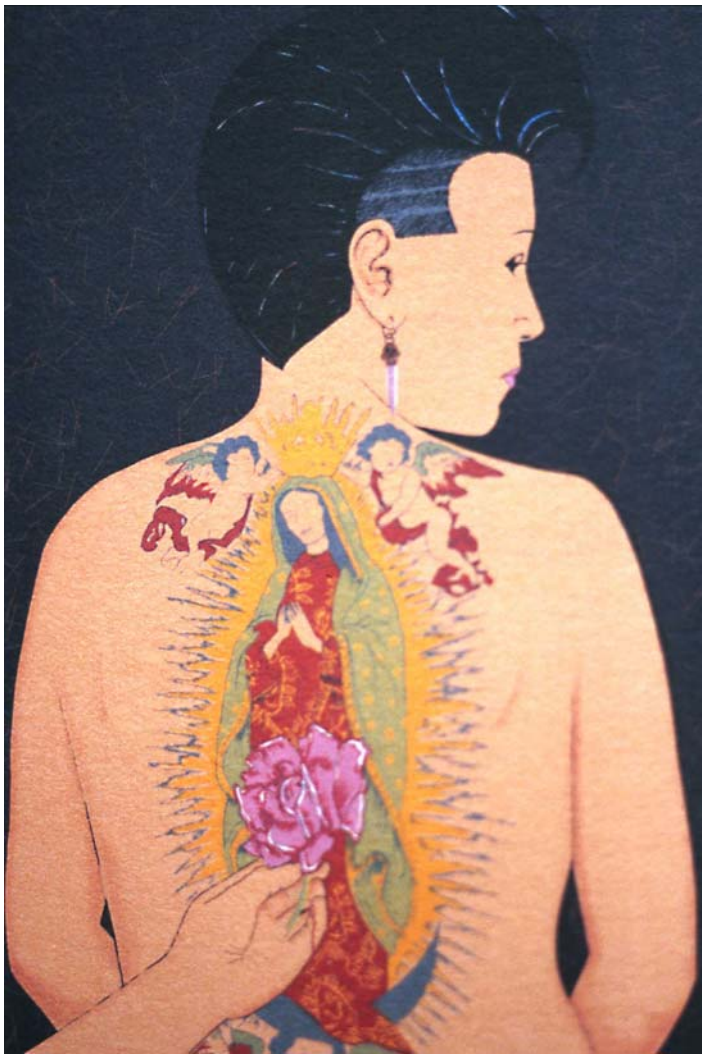

Figure 4.3
Ester Hernández, *La Ofrenda* (The Offering), Silkscreen, 1988, 38 3/8 x 25 in.

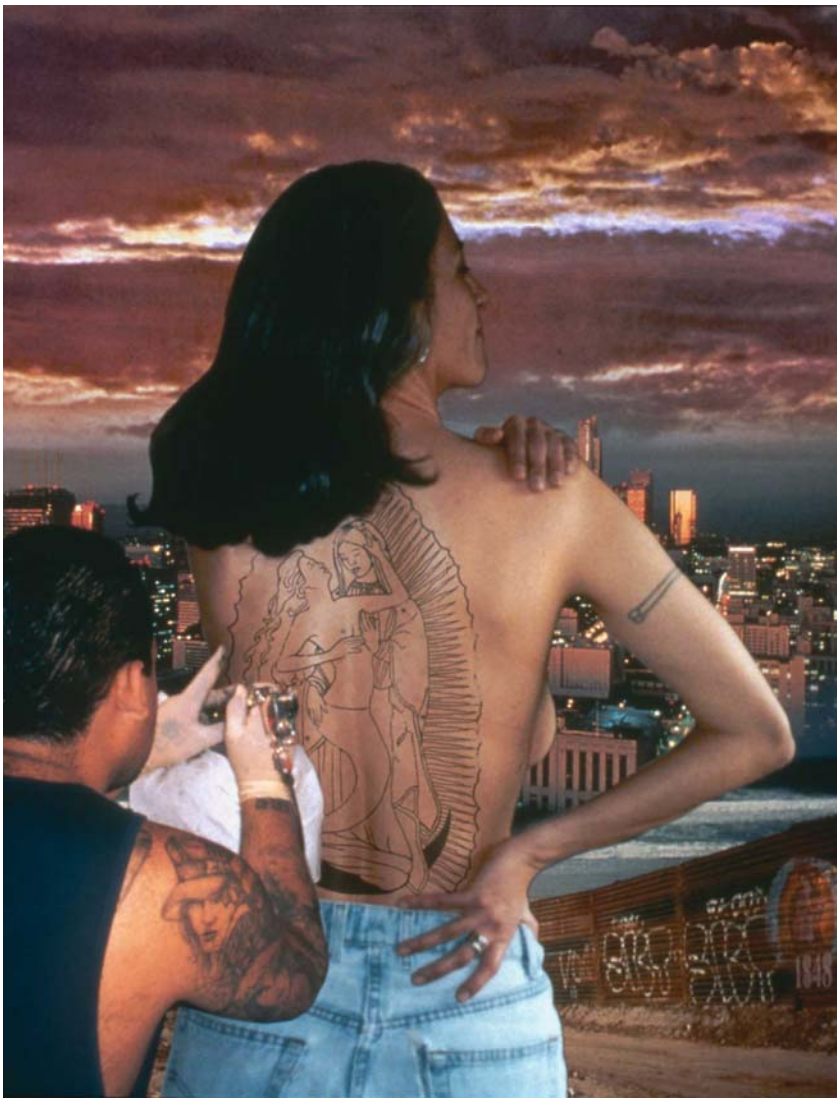

Figure 4.4
Alma López, *Tattoo*, Digital Print, 1999

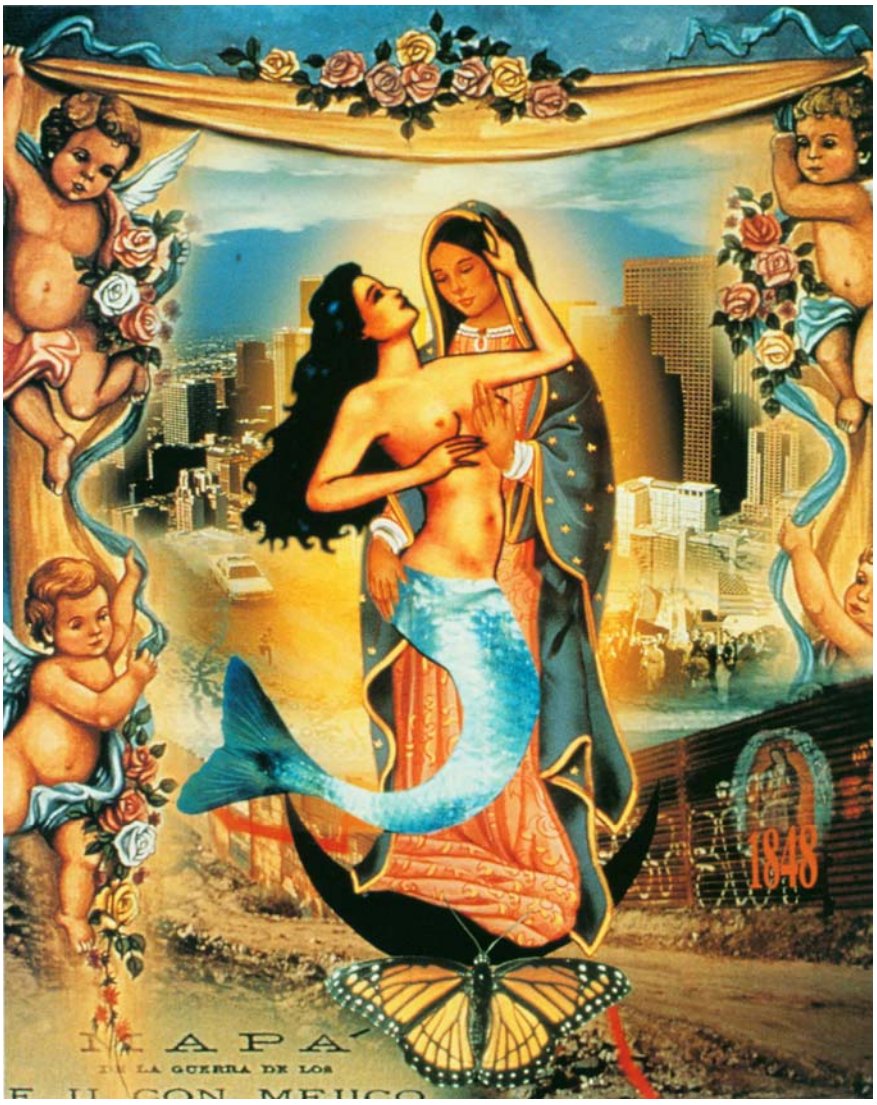

Figure 4.5
Alma López, *Lupe y Sirena in Love*, 1999, Iris/Giclée print, 17 1/2 x 14 in.

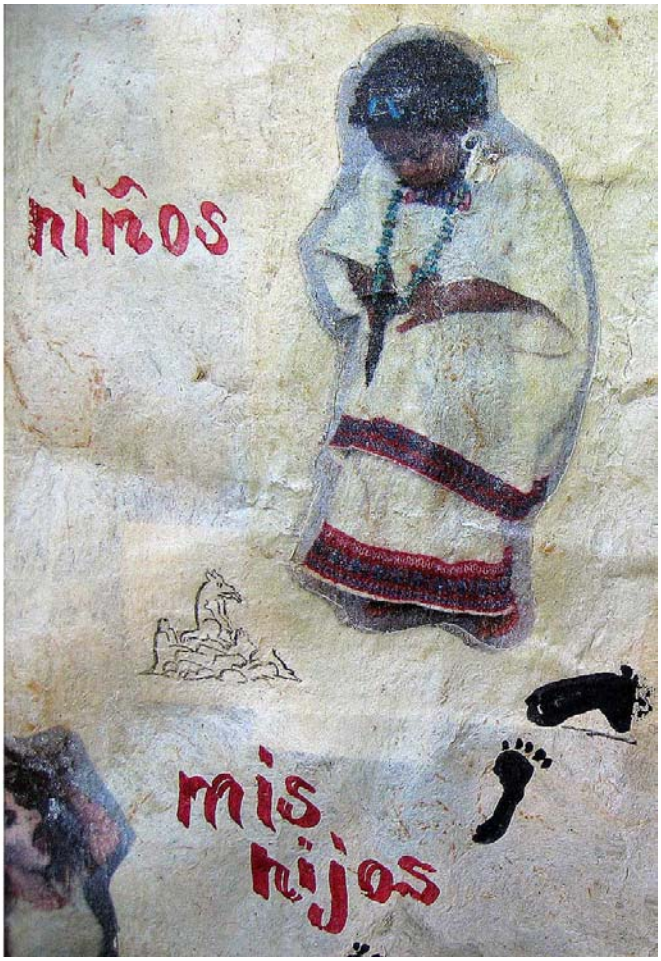

Figure 4.6
Delilah Montoya, *Codex Delilah, Six Deer, Journey from Mexicatl to Chicana*, Detail of Panel 2, Register 2, 1992, Gouache on amate paper, Mixed media, 20 x 80 x 13 3/4 in., Copyright Ann Marie Leimer

Figure 4.7
Delilah Montoya, *Codex Delilah, Six Deer, Journey from Mexicatl to Chicana*, Detail of Panels 6 and 7, Register 2 and 3, 1992, Gouache on amate paper, Mixed media, 20 x 80 x 13 3/4 in., Copyright Ann Marie Leimer

Figure 4.8
Ruler Holding a Flaming Torch, Lintel 24, Yaxchilán, Mexico,
725 CE, Limestone, 43 1/4 x 30 1/2 in.

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